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LETTERS  
TO  
THE AMERICAN PEOPLE,  
ON  
CHRISTIANITY AND THE SABBATH,  
BY  
HORATIO PRATER, Esq.

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“Religious insincerity—commonly called cant—is one of our special vices.”—Cox’s *Sabbath Laws*, &c., p. 214.

Les *Mœurs*, qui regnent aussi *imperieusement* que les lois.”  
MONTESQUIEU.

“Although faith and hope abide in the human mind, yet greater than these is charity—and greater far than this favourite sentiment of the Apostle, is justice.”—E. P. HURLBUT, Counsellor at Law, New York, *Of Constitutional Limitations*, p. 26.

“Thou shalt not entertain, much less enforce any religious dogmas, which divide mankind into distinct classes, and create animosities between them.”—LEWIS GOMPERTZ, Esq., *Tract, War Considered*.



LONDON:

J. CLAYTON AND SON, 223, PICCADILLY; HOLYOAKE AND CO.,  
147, FLEET STREET; TRUELOVE, 240, STRAND,  
TEMPLE BAR; FARRER, 21, JOHN STREET,  
FITZROY SQUARE.

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1856.



BL 2775  
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M'GOWAN AND CO., PRINTERS, LONDON.

R. 2. 147/38

## ADVERTISEMENT.

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I think it necessary to say, in reference to the defective arrangement of this work,—which is perhaps more particularly visible in Letter IV.—that my general plan is to write commentaries, or notes, on all the works I read. In consequence, I found it difficult to separate some reflections on Lord Brougham's *Political Philosophy*, and Sir A. Alison's *History*, only *indirectly* connected with the subject, from others which bore directly upon it. My views will be found to be the Protestant *principle* PROPERLY CARRIED OUT, united to Catholic *forms* as at present existing; and in my attacks on the established creed, I have purposely avoided ribaldry, and endeavoured to make my language as little offensive, as a free, and I trust, impartial examination, admitted; though probably, in the hurry of composition, I have not always succeeded on this point. Anxious to seize any new idea before it flies, a writer cannot be ever attentive to his mode of expressing it.

I should not probably have published the present work, had it not had a somewhat different object than suggesting a change in our national religion; for in the present age, suggestions for *mere demolition* have often before been made uselessly

by many first rate authors. I have consequently endeavoured to show what this change should be, and thus attempted also the work of *reconstruction*; hereby endeavouring to make my book *conservative*. I beg the evangelical reader, therefore, to turn towards the close of Letter IV., to see what these propositions are, when fatigued or annoyed, he asks, "What have you put in its place?"

I have referred once or twice to my *Historical Sketches of some of the Roman Emperors*, but this Essay is at present in *M.S.*; nor is it necessary to read the passages referred to in this *M.S.* Essay, in order to understand any part of the present work. They are merely facts or details on which my opinions rest.

In conclusion, I feel that in this publication, I address only the few; but shall, like the eloquent Beccaria, consider myself fortunate, if I obtain *even their* secret thanks. "Me fortunato, si potro ottenere, com'esso (Montesquieu), i segreti ringraziamenti degli oscuri et pacifici seguaci della RAGIONE!" (*Dei Delitti, Sect 1.*)

22, Beaumont Street,  
Marylebone, Nov., 29th, 1855.



TO THE MEMORY  
OF  
THE EMPEROR JULIAN,  
THE  
LAST OF THE ROMAN EMPERORS,  
WHO RESTORED  
THE POETICAL AND SO HIGHLY TOLERANT  
PAGAN RELIGION:

THIS WORK

HUMBLY RECOGNIZING THE SUPERIORITY OF THIS  
WORSHIP,

—ALL NATURE PERSONIFIED—

BOTH FOR ITS TRUTH AS WELL AS FOR ITS BEAUTY OVER  
EVERY OTHER RELIGION THAT HAS EVER  
YET EXISTED,

IS INSCRIBED.



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#### LETTER IV.

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Evidence that a great number of Republicans were put to death *in cold blood*, when at times the Royalists were successful in the struggle; that at the *very* commencement,

the former tried ineffectually means of conciliation, and at all events did not resort to the horrors of the "Baptisms, Marriages, &c.," till, goaded almost to madness by the approach of foreign armies, extreme severity seemed absolutely necessary for the safety of the Republic.

The above atrocities, however, were the sole work of Carrier, whose "authority," Alison admits, "was unbounded" in the Vendée; and he was subsequently justly guillotined for these crimes, though, I admit, not till Robespierre's fall. No evidence, however, to show that Robespierre would have recommended the putting of women and children to death by wholesale, or any cruelty (torture, &c., so prevalent in the *Christian* middle ages) in the mode of death to men, seeing the guillotine was expressly adopted, as apparently the quickest and easiest mode of execution for the real or supposed criminal.

Increased humanity commenced in 1795, not because Christianity was then allowed by law, but because the *constitution* also was made *less democratic*, and because of the *reaction* which always takes place in such circumstances. Humanity, however, only gained full force when the supreme power of the state became still more secure, by being placed in the hands of military leaders, viz., Barras and Napoleon.

Outward forms of any new Theistic church should be similar rather to those of the Catholic than the Protestant, as suggested by Sir T. More, who, in his *Utopia*, obviously prefers Theism and Plato to Christianity. . . .

Extracts from the work proving this curious point in reference to the distinguished Chancellor under Henry VIII.

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## NOTES.

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- C.—Details as to the punishment of death for witchcraft.
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LETTERS  
TO  
THE AMERICAN PEOPLE.

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LETTER I.

“It is not possible to destroy political servitude while allowing religious servitude to remain; the political springs by necessity from religious slavery. In that place where the priest may say to an entire people, ‘Surrender to me your reason without conditions,’ the Prince, by an infallible logic, may repeat also, ‘Surrender to me your liberty without control.’”—QUINET.

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CITIZENS,—After having read the laborious and learned work of Robert Cox *On Sabbath Laws and Sabbath Duties*, and observed therein that Dr. Arnold, in 1834, and Archbishop Whately, so late as 1849,\* have both given their opinion

\* Cox, p. 221. It is now a long while (viz., from September, 1853,) since Cox’s admirable book has been published; and I am sorry to say that, although written in such a spirit of moderation, that the author nowhere *directly* puts scripture authority aside, yet scarcely one of our *quarterly* or *monthly* journals has ever mentioned the book!! In consequence of this disposition to treat scripture with respect, Cox has been often forced into those *same ambiguous* views, which we see in the scripture itself: and this

that Sunday is a holiday, not by divine, but only by *ecclesiastical* institution—an opinion amply confirmed by others as well as by Cox himself—it is, I think, useless to anticipate for the present any change in the puritanical mode of keeping that day in England; or otherwise the writings of men of such influence as Arnold and Whately would long ago have tended to make it with English Protestants what it actually is with German Protestants (their theatres being open on the Sabbath), a day of *innocent recreation and amusement*, as well as of rest.\* The day, however, re-

is the great fault of his book. He, like most of us, has been obliged to sacrifice to “conventional hypocrisy.” (p. 390.) Surely, then, if such *amiable* objections to our creed are no better received by the press, it is time to speak out the *full* truth.

\* It is also to be remembered that George Combe’s *Constitution of Man* and also the *Vestiges of Creation* have now been published many years, and both sold to the extent of *many thousand* copies, and though Deistical, have not diminished clerical influence among us, or in the slightest degree altered our gloomy Sunday. Chapman, Watson, and Holyoake have also, for many years, sold thousands of copies of free-thinking books and tracts (still more *confessedly* Deistical and revolting to opinion than the above,) without effecting an *acknowledged and open avowal* of Deistical views in even what is worthy to be called a minority of our population. Thousands, no doubt, in this country are merely Deists in reality; but as the public confession of such views injures their reception in society, they feel obliged to keep their views private. While I admit, therefore, that the freedom of the press in these matters, is now, and has been since the death of Carlile (a martyr to the cause,) the “glory of England,” I still see no hopes of *any great practical* change in religion among ourselves. We are, *of course*, in a “false position” on account of our Established Church: so, indeed, I think are you Americans, even without any national church establishment, solely on account of the *public opinion* in your country being too favourable to, at all events, *some form of*

mains still with us a "heavy day" as even Wilberforce, (*Evidences of Christianity*,) called it, the Calvinistic moral gloom adding tenfold to the physical gloom of our London fogs.

Under such circumstances, I propose to address the "*pars altera*" of the Anglo-Saxon race on this subject; I mean the American people, who, having wisely separated Church and State, are in a better position than ourselves to effect ecclesiastical reforms. And should they wisely attempt such, I doubt not that the spirit of rivalry between the two nations, will soon induce ourselves to strive to follow their example—at least, indeed, I should *hope* such would be the effect.

One of yourselves, my friends, in his Treatise on the *Philosophy of Evil*, (Philadelphia, 1845,) has a section on *The Mischief of our Gloomy Sunday*; and yet, though written so lately, has produced no change in your Sabbath. Indeed, Lyman Coleman publishes years afterwards, (in 1852,) in the same city of Philadelphia, his *Ancient Christianity*, and says, "The whole English race, *wherever found*, alone have a Sab-

Christianity. But the difference between us is, that it seems far easier for you to effect reforms in this matter than it is for us.

In vain again did the *Edinburgh Review*, for 1850, say that free discussion on religion "is discountenanced on all sides, and branded with reproachful names." It is the same still; though it is some years since a journal of *such great influence* wrote as above! In 1852 the Sabbath Alliance boasted of our superiority over other countries, on account of the "freedom with order," attributing this chiefly to our Puritanical observance of the Sabbath. But *The Edinburgh* states what is still a *fact*. I deny our "freedom" *in reality*. It also appears, that a reprehensible pride, (viz., to be different from the continental people, whether they be right or wrong,) is concerned in this strict Sabbath observance.



bath, a Christian Sabbath, holy unto the Lord. With all else, throughout Christendom, the Sabbath is a holy day, a festival." (Quoted in Cox, p. 536.)

Coleman rightly gives the Puritans "the immortal honour," as he calls it, of introducing this austerity into the "States," which, no doubt, is their due; for Cox shows that even Knox and Calvin could only have indirectly influenced the custom. Of course Luther was too wise (though not a liberal-minded man in reality) ever to have given sanction to such a movement, and seems instinctively to have adopted Burke's wise maxim, viz., "That lawful enjoyment is the surest way to prevent unlawful gratification." (Cox, p. 448.) Accordingly, as already observed, the Lutheran Protestants have at this day their places of amusement open on Sunday evenings: by which means no doubt, in accordance with Burke's maxim, they prevent much of the drunkenness that vitiates *a little* the sanctity of our English and American Sabbath. Poor hard-worked wretches! what remains for them on a Sunday evening in a dense London fog, but to dissipate the vast moral and physical gloom by a little gin or more beer; and no wonder in such circumstances, after once feeling the exhilaration, if they *almost instinctively* take too much and retire to the new world of sleep wholly or partially intoxicated; and, of course, in either case with more or less injury to their health.

Hence it is, all in accordance with this view, that Cox has wisely put the following in succession in his Table of Contents (p. xviii.) "Knowledge of Human Nature needs to be diffused. Causes of the comparative sobriety of the French. Importance of recreation as a means of demolishing intemperance. Gloomy religious views foster this

vice. Religious Insanity. Drunkenness can be cured only in accordance with the maxim: *Sublatâ causâ, tollitur effectus.*"

In the work itself the reader will find these points fully elucidated, and will, I think, come to the conclusion that "Temperance Societies" are perfectly or nearly useless, while our "heavy Sunday" is suffered to remain.

Drunkenness and illicit intercourse of the sexes, and increased tendency to suicide and madness, are the bad effects of Calvinistic austerity, and perhaps the only shadow of any good in its favour is, its supposed tendency to increase respect for *rational* religion.

But while I acknowledge any institution that has this effect is useful, I maintain that the austerity in question *overshoots the mark*, and more often produces mere national hypocrisy, or absolute disgust, than additional respect for religious worship. It may, to a certain extent, increase the *outward* respect of religion in all classes, but this is almost always purchased at the too dear price of increased aversion to practice the moral duties of life. It actually becomes a sort of *substitute* for the same, as the Hon. W. Pitt says in his *Letter on Superstition*,\* "by setting up something as religion which shall atone and commute for the want of virtue." It renders hypocrisy in fact fashionable—no more. It affects the life, not the heart; and certainly has a tendency to produce that most odious spectacle—a nation of sanctified cheats. And, for my own part, I cannot help regarding the man who cheats you under the mask of religion as a far greater villain than he who

\* Holyoake, 147, Fleet Street. An unanswerable production, and worthy the man who favoured the liberal-minded Frederick the Great.

discards religion before he plunders his prey ; since in the former case he is truly “ taking God’s name in vain ” in the strictest sense, and then adds one sin to another.

As in England we have a national religion, there is with us, my friends, perhaps more excuse than with you for upholding our Puritanical Sabbath. Our very sovereign cannot turn Catholic without acting illegally and risking her throne ; and our saints would be sure to construe any relaxation of Sabbatarian discipline on her part, into a secret leaning towards Catholicism. With probably, therefore, the most liberal tendency in this respect, Her Majesty feels herself compelled to wear the gilded fetter in order to prevent anything like civil commotion.\* And as in Monarchies, the Sovereign is naturally enough, “ the fountain of honour,” few of consideration in the country feel inclined to do that which the Sovereign forbids herself to do. Our aristocracy, too, here, cling to religion as to the firmest support of the State ; and while reluctantly yielding to the Corn Law Bill, they still refuse Jewish Emancipation ; as if even the *slightest* alteration in the Constitution, as regards religion, were a change more to be deprecated than one which—as the Corn Law Bill—more decidedly affected their material interests. This prejudice extends—in a feebler degree certainly—to the Commons, and

\* We must also not forget that it was, *in great part*, for attempting to do the very same thing, viz., promote rational recreation for the Sunday, that Charles I. was beheaded. Therefore, in Britain, any Sovereign who even indirectly appeared to aid in such a change would, by the masses, who seldom reason justly on nice moral points, be considered as wishing to restore Despotism. Yet, in reality, such Sovereign would be acting just the contrary *now*.

throughout the country generally ; and as a proof of it, I may state that playing on the piano, or at chess or draughts, on a Sunday is almost as much in general abhorrence, in strict Protestant families, as going to the theatre or a ball on the same day. Now this shows the great influence of mere *opinion* on the subject, (see Sir Robert Peel's speech, 1835—quoted in Cox, p. 348,) as there is no actual law to prevent such amusements *in private*. The suppression of Sunday trains for passengers between Edinburgh and Glasgow (which caused Cox's book to be written) was also effected by the influence of opinion only, (the law itself rather inclining the opposite way,) which opinion has been formed chiefly by the constant repetition in our churches of the Jewish inscription: "Remember thou keep holy the Sabbath day." *Yet Sunday is not the Sabbath day ! !\**

Although in this *latter* respect, you Protestants of the States are probably in the same predicament as ourselves, this is not the case as regards your *temporary* Sovereign or President. *He*, at least, is free from all religious shackle ; and can consequently exert little or no influence in that respect on American society generally. He may be a Catholic, he may be a Jew, Unitarian, or even *disguised* Theist;† and you wisely enough con-

\* Cox shows this clearly enough ; yet half our population, not daring to think for themselves on religious matters conceive they really keep the Sabbath day. But the day has been changed from Saturday to Sunday, *without God's command or permission*. Now this in mortals, is as bad as blasphemy. The Jews are much wiser on this point ; they distinguish labour from amusement, and allow music, but do not permit even Jewish *servants* to work.

† Such were the illustrious Washington and Jefferson ; and I use the word "disguised" advisedly, as we shall see

sider him none the worse for that, or incapable, from such circumstance, of holding the first office in the State. In this, I must acknowledge, you are *far* before us ; as also in many of the men you send out as Ministers, being PROFESSED Unitarians, and sometimes even professed Theists or Pantheists. Show, then, I beseech you, that you are nationally above any illiberal prejudices of being thought too Catholic in your tastes, on a point in which religion is, *in reality*, not at all concerned ; I mean the opening places of amusement and recreation for the people on the Sabbath.

The real reason why these are closed among you, is doubtless the same which has caused them to be closed among us ; I mean a desire to “ keep holy the Sabbath day ;” but I have already briefly stated that this reason is untenable, and must refer you to Cox’s large work itself for more ample details and quotations on both sides of the question.

But as man is the slave of habit and prejudice much oftener than of reason, it seems not impossible that with many of you, even Cox’s arguments may be considered inadequate ; and if you ask me why, allow me say, that the real cause at the bottom of this will be, that Christianity has gained an undue and *actually unjust* ascendancy over pure natural Religion, or Deism, in your Republic. This has been the invariable tendency of Christianity whenever it has been in competition with other religions ; alike at its origin with the graceful mythology of the ancients\*—under the Roman em-

hereafter, that religion is not perfectly free even in the United States.

\* All other religions, were content with the toleration—far superior to our own Protestant so-called toleration—of the state religion of Rome ; and naturally enough ; for



perors, as under your Republic. It is in vain, therefore, that your constitution says, all religions are equal in the eye of the law, for all *revealed* religions are necessarily intolerant, and will never be contented with what they ought to be, *viz*, just equality. I shall proceed to elucidate this proposition by extracts from *Human Rights and their Political Guarantees*,\* by your countryman, Mr. Counsellor Hurlbut; and I shall then follow up this Letter by an examination of the *utility* of Christianity to Government, for the belief in this opinion I doubt not is also at the bottom of your great external respect for that religion, and consequently concerned in keeping up your gloomy Sunday.

“The constitution of North Carolina,” says Mr. Hurlbut, “was amended in 1836, the word Christian being substituted for the word Protestant, in the following sentence:—“No person who shall deny the truth of the Protestant Religion, shall be capable of holding any office, or place of trust, or profit, in the civil department of the state.’ It is also stated in the same, that—‘All men have a natural and unalienable right to worship Almighty God according to the dictates of their conscience.’—Thus,” says Mr. H., “they may worship and the state will not interrupt them; but it will inquire as to the divinity they adore—and if it be not the constitutional Jehovah, the

they had their niches in the *Pantheon*, and seemed placed on actual equality with the heathen gods themselves. But Christianity was not content until it could *dethrone*, so to speak, those who were so liberal. Surely here was *just* reason for persecuting it, especially since it was itself a dangerous fiction.

\* With notes by George Combe.—Edinburgh, 1847  
Maclachlan.

unlawful worshippers will be excluded from *civil* offices. They may, however, hold military offices—the state being content to have heathens bleed in its defence,” (*Of Constitutional Limitations*, p. 27.)

In Massachusetts again, the government has the power to require, “*Protestant* teachers of piety to be supported by the parishes, when provision shall not be made for them voluntarily.” Every *Christian* sect is to be equally protected by the laws.

“*This portrays*,” (continues Mr. H., justly,) “*the infant state of religious freedom in the cradle of liberty.*”—to wit—“*A species of religious establishment and its compulsory support.*” Mr. H. rightly says “a species,” for equally, as in North Carolina, some form of *Christianity* is obligatory, or the penalty of what is really persecution *by law*, as well as by opinion, must be borne.

It is consolatory to observe by an amendment adopted in 1820, that the *chief officers of state* are now not required to declare that they believe in Christianity :\* but the above regulations remain unchanged.

In New York too, “the legislature may interfere with the rights of opinion—and the courts in the administration of the common law, may punish a man for speaking against the prevailing religion (*i. e.* Christianity) of the country !” (*Ibid.* 27.)

“But if,” continues Mr. H., “law take into

\* The revised constitution for New York for 1846, provides, “that no person shall be rendered incompetent to be a witness on account of his religious belief.” (Combe, note, p. 81.) Thus *perfect* religious liberty is slowly but happily progressing, though Combe does not know if the above has passed the legislature. See also further on for confirmation of this reflection in reference to the State of New York

favour the religion of the majority, it tyrannizes over the minority ; if it establishes the religion of the Christian, it offends the Infidel, the Jew, and the Heathen." As the majority make the laws, it was to be expected that one like that of New York, would sooner or later be made ; but while it exists, let our worthy American friends confess, that religious liberty or equality is a mere hypocritical farce among them. The punishment by *opinion* was constitutional and not actually unjust in such cases ; but when the majority go further and make actual law on the subject, they then clearly become tyrannical, and if they do not violate the constitution, they certainly violate the laws of eternal and immutable justice.

Mr. Hurlbut mentions the statute of the State of New York on common school education, enacted only in 1844, in which we find, that if " books containing sectarian doctrine of any particular Christian or other religious sect are used in such schools, these shall not be entitled to monies from the school fund of the State ; yet it continues, " nothing herein contained shall authorize the exclusion of the Holy Scriptures *without note or comment !*"\* (p. 28.) Mr. H., says, " I do not perceive how the legislature obtained any idea as to what Scriptures are holy and what are not—

\* All this shows (even in its disguise), the *inherent* intolerance of Christianity, which induced Justinian to put down even the venerable schools of Athens: " That," says Gibbon, " which even Gothic arms did not do, was done by a religion, whose ministry superseded the exercise of reason, resolved every question by an article of faith, and *condemned the sceptic to eternal flames !*" (Chap. 40, Justinian.) Paganism was in some degree compensated for its *utter* downfall through the influence of Christianity, by Gibbon's statement, " That its introduction, or, at least, abuse, had some influence on the fall of the Roman Empire." \* \* \*

what are with, and what are without note and comment."

"It would seem that we need further constitutional provisions, such as will render it impossible for the religionist of any sect whatever to obtain the least legal recognition, the adoption of his sacred books, or any other favour from the state. Until the State takes the position of perfect indifference and impartiality, the rights of conscience will not be secure, and that religious freedom so much boasted of in America will rest upon an insecure foundation."

"While several of the States punish blasphemy, declaring Sunday to be holy time, require officers to believe in the Christian religion, the clergy who teach all these things are disfranchised." (In New York, for instance,, they can hold no civil office or place within the state.)

"Democracy," he adds, "cuts an awkward figure in coquetting with religion. It had better assume at once an air of perfect indifference."

"But, it is inquired," says he, "can a State exist which recognises no religion? I answer that it can as well as if it do not recognise music." (p. 28.)

I may observe in reference to this point, that if we leave the mind perfectly free, as believing or not in a future state of rewards and punishments, we ought to increase the severity of the laws, and also, as Beccaria† suggested, establish institutions for rewarding virtue. In a republic *some* form of

"Under it," says he, "the Roman world was oppressed by a *new species* of tyranny." Yet, with philosophic impartiality he admits further on, that it tended to diminish the ferocious barbarity of the barbarians who conquered Rome. (Chap. 38—end.)

\* *Dei Delitti* xli.—Come si prevengono i delitti.

religion (pure Theism better than any) seems almost necessary, and has existed in all ancient republics. Athens had too much superstition and persecuted those of true religion, *viz.*, the philosophers, including Socrates. Venice too was a very religious republic; so at present is Switzerland. They all seem to err, not in having respect for *religion itself—but in having had, and still having* respect for an *intolerant* and false religion. The *Religion of Nature* is clearly the only true religion; and as it existed before Christianity, so it will exist after it.

I observe Mr. Combe, in his note on religious education, (*Op. Cit.*, p. 83), asks:—"Would not Mr. Hurlbut's views tend to convert schools into seminaries of Calvinism, Catholicism, and Socialism, &c., according to the opinions of the majority, and so to rear sects filled with inveterate hostility to each other? The government may legitimately and beneficially aid, and sometimes enforce, the active obedience of its subjects to the natural laws. \* \* \* 'Man has no right to be dirty or grossly ignorant (because by being so, he *justly* injures or offends those near him) and, if so, has no *right* to relief from the parish. He ought to be *forced* to change.' \* \* \* If we suppose a government to possess a code of really pure morality and religion, clearly expressed and practically elucidated, would not a people be in better condition at the end of two centuries of teaching of this code *by force of law*, than that in which they would be found after the same period of sectarian teaching, such as they would receive if left to the uncontrolled guidance of their clergy. After instancing Prussia, (which though the best practical example, is not to his point as being exclusively Christian), he adds:—"If government be supposed in the



right, is not the practice of right *always* beneficial?"

I am inclined to believe these views of Combe to be just: they were those of two sincere Republicans living in different ages, Plato and Rousseau, on this subject: they thought that Republicanism might *with justice* try and enslave the mind to virtue, by compelling SOUND religious belief, if it left the laws otherwise free. We have only to look at the United States now (the *best educated country in the world*)—we have only, I say, to reflect on her Quakers, Shakers, Rappites, Mormons, and Spirit Rappers, and we may rationally enough come to the conclusion, that the *multitude* ought not to be left perfectly free as regards their religious belief; since the state of that country shows clearly enough, that a man's religion depends far less on his reason, than on his hopes and fears and prejudices, and the *opinion* of the country: so that, in truth, he is enslaved on the subject, when appearing to be left free. The false opinions on this subject to which he is thus forced, increase the natural intolerance of human nature, as no man can possibly be a *sincere* believer in Christianity, and not feel more or less horror or detestation of all "Jews, Turks, and Infidels." If any Republic would make natural religion the religion of the State, and enforce payment to this, it would be nothing else than diminishing the temptation to adopt any other of the revealed religions, (always necessarily intolerant), and consequently would be indirectly diminishing the strong temptation to injustice which naturally exists in human nature.

"As regards the observance of a day of rest," says Mr. H., "the State has an undoubted authority to abstain from all action on such a day; *but it*

*cannot rightfully compel any man to keep Sunday as a religious institution ; nor can it require him to cease from labour or recreation on that day, since it cannot be shown that the ordinary exercise of the human faculties on that day is in any way an infringement on the rights of mankind."* (p. 28.)

Combe, (in his Note F., p. 83,) says—"In the recent discussions in Scotland, the Sabbatarian party has strongly overlooked the *right* of those who take a different view of the matter from theirs, to *act* upon that view if they please."

But supposing they do "act upon it," they are still punished, as I conceive unjustly, though by opinion only, as such opinion is founded on a falsehood,—by which the multitude is in many cases led involuntarily,—I mean that the scriptures are the word of God, and that they inculcate the puritanical observance of Sunday, as a positive duty.

I believe with Mr. H., that the State cannot *rightfully* compel any man to keep Sunday in this way. But unjust as punishment by opinion only is in such cases, government has still increased the injustice in England, and the States by making *actual law* on the subject, and compelling all public places of amusement to be closed on a Sunday evening.

Hurlbut very justly says, "*there is in this country, viz, the States, a SPECIES of religious establishment, NOTWITHSTANDING the constitutional provisions, for the free exercise of religious belief.*" (p. 26.)

Now I would beg to enquire whether such a state of things may not be called actually *illegal* ? Legal or illegal—this *hermaphrodite* condition in reference to religion—fostering as it does through the whole population a state of hypocrisy—which

is necessarily carried in a greater or less degree into all the affairs of life, and is continually prompting to actual lying, and consequently to dishonesty, is very disgusting to a candid and honourable mind; and must be inwardly so to many of yourselves, American citizens.

## LETTER II.

CITIZENS,—I shall begin this letter by some considerations as to the *utility* of Christianity to government, being convinced it is the belief in its supposed utility, far more than in the actual truth of the religion, that causes it to remain still so much respected even by some enlightened statesmen.

When I find such men as Frederick the Great of Prussia, your late President, the illustrious Jefferson, and I may, perhaps, add the late Lord Chesterfield, holding such opinions as regards its utility, I approach this topic with respect, but still with the firm conviction that these distinguished men were mistaken.

1st.—In the first place, an irremediable fault in it is, *the great uncertainty as to what it really teaches*; for by its endless contradictions, the mind feels greater difficulty in seizing its real tenets than those of mere natural religion for these are written by nature herself in the consciences of all mankind.

Hence it is, “that religious wars among christians, and deaths from the inquisition, have cost the lives of 67,000,000 human beings;” whereas “the variety of religions and gods in the heathen world neither produced wars, nor dissensions among the different nations.”\*

I admit, that by a wise separation of church and state, you have prevented in a great measure

\* Mosheim’s Ecclesiastical History quoted in Trevelyan’s pamphlet, (p. 6.,) on the *Insanity of Mankind*. (Bailliere.)

religious wars; but you have not been able to effect impossibilities, and to eradicate the inherent *intolerant spirit* from the Christian creed, as Mr. Hurlbut's remarks just quoted show. You only suffer from this, less than other nations. The flame of opinion, increased by the hopes and fears of the Christian's death, obliges the "pious" among you to persecute *socially*

In consequence of preaching the eternity of punishments, Christianity teaches intolerance more clearly perhaps, than any other tenet; and yet leaving its meaning, as to the trinity or unity, election, justification by faith, real presence, &c., &c., debateable points, itself tends to foster endless disputes between Catholics, Protestants, and Unitarians. We have just seen what slaughter *it has caused* in the world, and much undoubtedly remains for *unborn ages*, who will have to go through the same *phases* before they arrive at the same *civilisation*, and consequently *indifference* on the subject. In this respect, so far from surpassing the Romans, we are only now *gradually* coming near them in real civilisation. Let it, however, be remembered, that there is even *now* only one nation of any strength in the world—(viz., your own), where all actual persecution *by law* is difficult, and you will be convinced how much misery is yet in store for mankind from such uncertainty as to the meaning of this supposed revelation. A Republic, with Church and State separate, is the only means of *completely* taking away the power of persecution from Christianity by law,—I wish I could say also by opinion. To the end of the Chapter there will likewise be Catholic Missionaries, as well as Protestant, anxious from the mere spirit of selfishness to secure, as they conceive their own salvation, by interfering with other



people's business, or, in fact, trying to make converts among savage tribes. In consequence among these *real* converts and believers, there will always be war and discord; for the *odium theologicum* (among Christian Sects) cannot *die*, though it may sleep for a time.

2ndly.—Christianity tends to enslave the immortal mind, by assuming, as it does, a power over the thoughts, (since even “looking on a woman to lust after her,” is absurdly enough put down in this creed, as the same as actually committing adultery, whereas it is clear that though a man “lust after a woman,” yet still, by considerations of duty, he might be prevented from desiring carnal knowledge of her.) Thus, I say, under the profound cant of purifying the mind, and censuring what none can prevent, (for who can prevent mere desire for the opposite sex?) Christianity fosters the worst form of slavery—that of the mind. We see this feature in taking other aspects of it, for it everywhere puts faith before reason; and *consistently* followed, would lead all again to become ignorant monks.

That it also sanctions *bodily* slavery is clear enough; and it is only by an advance in civilisation that the feeling against slavery has increased of late years, for it existed for centuries after the introduction of Christianity, and no one dreamt that it was censured by this faith. Indeed, how can it be, for the faith itself makes some of the greatest virtues to consist in a *base humility*? Slavery is the essence of *all real* Christianity. But on earth we have only a mock and spurious—because really impracticable scheme. If born in Heaven, it should have kept there, for it *never has been*, and never can be acted on by the inhabitants

of earth. And the attempt to keep up even the appearance of being Christian, has been the *secret* cause of all the *cant* which so eminently distinguishes the Anglo-Saxon race; since it tends to make all of us found our opinions of real virtue on the false standard contained in this system. Consequently, no man among us is what he really seems, or wishes to seem, for we are naturally under the circumstances, anxious to have the merit of "piety and chastity," (I wish I could add "*poverty*," and thus complete the Christian vow,) that scarcely any of us merit.

All this it is that has produced such a difference in our literature from that of the Greeks and Romans. These men spoke out on all subjects, especially those relating to the intercourse of the sexes, and show *mankind as it really is*; while to read our literature one would go away with the false idea that we were the most moral and modest of people. But, as Voltaire says, this sort of modesty often extends no farther than our lips. It is really a pleasure to read the works of this writer, Bayle, Rousseau, Gibbon, or Hume, in comparison with the works of our *very* Christian historians or philosophers—for it is like reading the ancients instead of the moderns. Christianity, you will say, has therefore elevated our literature; I rather think it has debased it by a perfectly unnatural spirit of cant. Hume himself justly says, hinting perhaps also to this point. "In general there is more candour in ancient historians. Our speculative factions, especially those of *religion*, throw such an illusion over our minds, that men seem to regard impartiality to their adversaries and to heretics, as a vice or weakness." A man so lost to all sense of natural *religion* as to regard "impar-

tiality as a weakness," is a perfect disgrace to any free government.\*

I have censured the Anglo-Saxon race more particularly on this point, because somehow or another, abroad, Protestant, or Roman Catholic writers (especially the French) do not carry prudery so far. We may witness this in our English translations. Some time ago I bought two—one of Faust, and one of Herodotus,—and it was not until I had read the preface that I perceived that many passages in each had been omitted, as improper for English translation. Now as this was not stated on the title page, it became something

\* *Essays*, Vol. I., note EE., page 552. The probable reason of this difference is, that *we* wish to be thought more eminently Christian than the other church sects do; so we are striving after Christian *appearances*. Hence our proverbial cant. Cox has some good observations which will apply, though indirectly, to this point, and show how it is that there is more of this religious pretension (cant) among Protestants than among Catholics, for such I think is the case. "There is no essential difference between a claim of infallibility HONESTLY expressed in words, and a *tacit assumption* of infallibility, by our conduct towards those who differing from us, commit precisely the offence and no more, which we commit in differing from them. That we may really be the Protestants we call ourselves, it is not enough to abuse the Pope, and assert against *him* the right of private judgement in religion, we must acknowledge and *respect* in all others (whether Jews, Roman Catholics, Deists, or even Atheists) the rights which in our own case we hold so precious." (*Op. Cit.*, p. 376.) The fact is, our English Protestantism is only a sort of *half* toleration, so that a man who only goes as far as Unitarianism, is held—by *Protestants* too—not to be a Christian, and of course to be a *Deist* is to expose oneself to *open* persecution. Now the Pope, admitting *no* dissent prevents all this cant which among Protestants flourishes because Protestantism is now our state religion, and because full toleration is not *in reality* allowed by public opinion or even by law.

more than a mere "pious fraud," and with all the sanctity of religion, amounted to actual dishonesty.

That the same spirit of prudery animates Christianity on the other side of the Atlantic is clear from various facts, and though it may not be true that the *legs* of pianos are not allowed to be seen, still I find it stated only in to-day's paper, that advertisements occur in which shirt and chemise are called men's and women's "under vests." There is little harm in all this certainly, and only as far as it seems to lead to *actual* falsehood and dishonesty, as mentioned at the end of Letter I., is it reprehensible. But I cannot help thinking that the tendency of a really *impracticable* code which necessarily leads to dishonesty in words, is to produce the same in acts. For it is in vain I look all through the New Testament for that constant exhortation to fair-dealing in business and the common affairs of life, which is so admirably insisted on in Plato's last and greatest work on government, viz., his *Laws*. "The foundation of virtue," justice, as Mr. Hurlbut well insinuates, is completely forgotten in the constant exhortation to an *unreasonable*, and if I may so speak, often unjust "charity."\*

\* The philosopher will also remark, that after asserting that "looking on a woman to lust after her," is committing adultery with her, we find that Christ dismissed a woman *actually taken in adultery* without *punishment or even stating that she deserved any!* A specimen this of "uncertainty of meaning." There is also no *scale* of punishment, but sins of the most unequal magnitude are all grouped together as if of equal magnitude. Witness, for instance, the expression, "Whoremongers and adulterers God will judge," and another where "fornication and unnatural lust" are put on the very *same* category. Cox says, "fornication, in the abstract, was not forbidden to the Jews," and quotes Bishop Horsley, who says, "In the heathen world it was never thought a crime, except it was accompanied by injury to a virgin's honour, or the violation of



3rdly.—By the progress of the arts and sciences among us, we have *gradually* come to make the science, as taught in scripture, *totally* untenable. Galileo long ago suffered for that absurd passage which makes the sun turn round the earth; and at the present day, Dr. Buckland among ourselves was persecuted by opinion, because he attempted to show that geology is totally at variance with the *recent* formation of the earth, as asserted in Scripture.

Other absurdities in respect to science still, however, remain almost unnoticed; such, for instance, as, “Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live.” But as modern science has shown that “animal magnetism” is for the most part an absurdity, so it will reasonably declare the same of witchcraft. Yet the numbers who have been put to death all over Europe for this purely imaginary crime, are almost inconceivable

Now, I would beg to ask, what is to prevent the same *murder* again, when our missionaries have introduced the Scriptures among savages? Many of these “religious” men still believe in this infernal art, notwithstanding its absurdity; and even

the marriage bed.” Horsley praises the Christian religion for making it a breach of natural morality. (Cox, p. 515.) But Christianity has no practical effect in diminishing it, (witness our London streets at night,) and *even now* the vast proportion of men of sense *secretly* (at all events) consider this “heathen” view the only rational one on the subject. I do not by these remarks attempt to justify even mere fornication, but what I say is, that *with the present system of society* it is a necessity as *the world itself* shows. Under such circumstances, when our Litany couples it with all other “*deadly sin*,” we at once see the lamentable reign of Anglo-Saxon cant. If *the woman is well provided for*, it is often, even now, no sin at all, especially when married parties cannot agree well enough to live together, and being *Catholics*, cannot marry again.

suppose none of them did, savages are sure to do so long after the introduction of the Scriptures. And there in the holy book is the command of *death to all witches*. The consequence is clear, viz., that as the intensity of faith is always greater at first, and particularly among barbarous, ignorant nations, the mischief of introducing Scriptures containing such commands\* among such a people is obvious.

\* One of the most frequent vices among savages, and even among civilised nations, is dishonesty or fraud. But that religion which says, "Let not your right hand know what your left doeth," and also exhorts us to be "mild as doves, and *cunning* as serpents," is surely not the school for teaching *fair dealing*.

Again, Paley says it does *not* forbid war. But if it did *certainly* do so, it would, *in this respect*, be a benefactor to mankind. But here, as elsewhere, its *ambiguity* is a constant curse to its beneficial effects. Instead of having "brought life and immortality to light," it has enveloped them in double darkness when its *whole narration* is considered.

There is no doubt that the best religion that can be preached to savages is Theism, and at *the same time* such a degree of physical science as shall prevent that fear of supernatural agency which has been a principal cause of human sacrifices, and other abominable religious rites. The nature of thunder and lightning should be most especially explained to them in reference to diminishing all fear of this being sent to punish sin by an offended God.

This seems a far better way of creating an opinion in a savage country against human sacrifices than by preaching Christianity. Such opinion will eventually cause a law to be made against such abominations; and it is in reality law that puts down such enormities with the great majority, for religion acts on the consciences of the few, its rewards and punishments being so remote.

I may take this opportunity to state that I have recommended physical science to be taught to savages at *the same time* with Theism, chiefly in consequence of the many proofs of superstition found in the otherwise pure system of religion enounced by Plato in his *Republic* and *Laws*.



4thly.—As to the question, whether or not the belief in Christianity is conducive to *human happiness* (*always supposing the power of any great degree of persecution is as effectually suppressed as it is by the constitution of the United States,*) there may be difference of opinion. The ground for supporting such opinion will principally be that the Christian faith teaches the *certainty* of a future life, in which we shall be *sure* to meet our departed relatives and friends again. But against this good point, we may place the following, which will make us decide that the belief in Christianity (even under such a favourable government, for its most beneficial operation as the “States,”) is not desirable for human happiness.

This opinion is grounded on the fact, that it is impossible, on account of the *uncertainty* of its doctrines as above stated, to separate only the good from the bad, that it seems to teach—the sins or faults, as some people say, of its professors, from the “pure doctrine” itself.

Thus, for instance, we find that even in the States what may be called the most rational and purest forms of the creed (*viz.*, Unitarianism and

In this latter work, for instance, (p. 351, *Traduction de Grou*, 1851,) Plato recommends that whoever is well skilled in Divination, &c., &c., and would *use such arts to hurt any one* should be put to death! Had Plato studied physical science more, he would have seen the fallacy of “the occult sciences,” and consequently never would have made such a barbarous law. The fault was however in the age in which he lived, for Plato knew as much as most men on such points. Neither should the Theism preached to savage tribes inculcate more than *remotely* God’s providence, and that virtue and vice are to be punished hereafter, and *not now*, and also in another world; for it was from teaching God’s constant interference in human affairs, that the barbarous “trial by combat” of the middle ages arose.

Universalism) are still very *unfashionable*, to say the least; so that, strangely enough, opinion punishes the sects much in proportion as they attempt to set reason above "faith," and *that too in the most educated country in the world!* You need only read Theodore Parker's sermon, *Some Account of my Ministry*,\* to be convinced of the great social persecution he has had to undergo, for attempting to proceed a few steps further than common Unitarianism, though he still upholds his creed as Christian. His sect is still much smaller than that of Unitarians in general, because it is still more reasonable; but (I use the expression with great respect) he dare not openly advocate pure Deism, or he would probably have no congregation at all.

The Trinitarians then, and that abominable form of them the Calvinistic, constitute the decided majority of Christians in the States. Thus the doctrine that "sins committed against an infinite Being deserve infinite punishment," is uppermost there—a doctrine which, as Mrs. Barbauld justly says, "no persons can have often in their thoughts and be cheerful."†

The celebrated Pinel said, "Nothing is more common in hospitals than madness, produced by

\* *Theism*, &c., &c. pp. 256-278. (Chapman, London. 1853.)

† Cox, p. 230-2. He rightly adds: "Such views introduce a standard of moral feeling, totally different from those ideas of praise or blame, upon which we do, and must act, in our commerce with our fellow-creatures." (p. 232.) It is by such ideas, that men have come to the belief that sins against God deserve greater *human* punishment than those committed against their fellow-creatures—a most monstrous doctrine. It were far better to be of no religion at all, than believe in such a creed.

too exalted devotion, or by religious terrors.”\* The truth of these remarks is fully borne out by the madness produced by Calvinism some years back, which appeared under the guise of the “unknown tongues;” and latterly in the “States” the journals assert that a species of frenzy, often accompanied by suicide, has arisen from too vivid a belief in *revealed* religion, and supposed “spirit rappings,” as if the old fallacious belief, taught by Christ himself, and which contributed much to the spread of Christianity, that the destruction of the world was at hand! was reviving on the other side the Atlantic.

I say, as it is impossible to separate the idea of “*eternity* of punishments, the existence of a devil, and that Jesus should before long come back in the clouds of Heaven,” from the belief of Christianity itself, that the idea that this religion gives, and will always continue to give, to a great proportion of those who believe in it of a future state, is not, on the whole, conducive to human happiness.

Theodore Parker, from whom the above quotation is taken, says, “I do not accept such belief on the authority of Jesus; *yet I am ready to believe he taught it.*”† If, then, Parker was obliged to believe (no doubt contrary to his own wish) that Christ taught the above doctrines, of course those who almost wholly put aside reason, when they take up scripture, cannot for a moment doubt that such is really scriptural doctrine; and “a very comfortable creed,” (as Lord Byron says,) this indeed for our missionaries to teach savages. The belief of a future state, as taught by the ancients,‡

\* Cox, p. 418.

† Op. Cit., p. 264.

‡ I observe that Sir C. Lyell (2nd Visit to the United

has something far less repulsive about it than that of our Orthodox Christian, as the reading of the 6th book of Virgil's *Æneid* will show. Yet the species of "purgatory" therein described was a real and equally effectual punishment for sin; and gives a far more favourable idea of the JUSTICE, as well as the mercy, of God.

5thly.—But, it may be asked, is not Theodore Parker's very liberal form of Unitarianism—rejecting as he does the belief in miracles, *eternity* of punishments, and even the Divinity of Christ to a further extent (if I may so express myself) than Unitarians generally\*—better than rejecting it *in toto*, and confessing at once to a belief in Deism only? I think it is not; and for the following reasons. Because it is tending to keep up that hypocritical spirit in the States to which I have before alluded, as disposing to lead to actual

States) says, speaking of "the absence of genuine religious liberty" there, in which Cox justly agrees with him (*Sabbath Laws, &c.*, p. 394,) "that this can only be reformed by educating the millions and dispelling their ignorance, prejudices, and bigotry." This will be insufficient, as Sir C. should well know; for America is *now* the best educated country *in the world*. No amelioration ever can take place on this subject, until the *influence of Christianity is restrained*, and Deism put in the place it is entitled to, and in which it would be put, if the laws were properly carried out, or at least not made null by opinion. Cox has come very far nearer the mark, when he says, (p. 396,) "*the fetters of THE CLERGY must be struck off.*" Now, of course they are bound to *say* they believe Christianity, whether they do or not; and being some of the best educated people in the States, it is much by their influence that a belief in Christianity is kept up in the country.

\* "Christ is not without errors, not without the stain of his times, and, I presume, of course, not without *sins*." (Parker on Deism, &c., &c. p. 264.) This last expression is indeed a "clencher" for our pious Trinitarians.

dishonesty in the affairs of life;\* for it is pretty clear that, though Mr. Parker thinks it a fit, or perhaps necessary, sacrifice to public opinion to put a *scripture text* to the head of each of his Sermons, he puts little or no belief in the book from which such texts are taken, any further than as he conceives he finds in it better morality than in the writings of the heathen philosophers. "I reverence the Christian Church," says he, "for the great good it has done for mankind. So the Mahomedan, for a far less good. I reverence the scriptures for every word of truth they teach." (*Op. Cit.*, p. 264.)

Now mark the words, "every word of truth they teach," and we shall be convinced he thinks they teach a great deal that is not true. Indeed he admits this by implication, and, to a certain extent, by open confession, as we have already seen.

\* A good illustration of this is seen at p. 64 of Mr. Parker's work. He says: "A man of property in Boston dishonestly failed," and yet *legally* secured considerable property to himself, after having paid only sixpence or a shilling on the dollar; one creditor only not giving him a discharge. Our bankrupt afterwards turned very religious, and when, *in consequence*, was applied to again by the creditor for payment, replied, "Business is business, and is for the week," and "Religion for Sunday;" and "paid him not a cent."

Truly, in the States, as with us, more religion is wanted behind the counter, and it should not be shut up six days in the week with our churches.

Jesus told a rich man to sell *all* he had, to give to the poor. Now the consideration of this fact, as it is called in Christian history, will show equally as the above anecdote, what profound hypocrisy is at the bottom of all the so-called belief in Christianity. What rich man among our *most pious* professing Christians does this? Yet he will still presume to call himself a Christian!



Now, under such circumstances, may we not reasonably ask, if Christ be wrong once or twice, why may he not also be wrong in that most important doctrine of all that he teaches; I mean a state of future rewards and punishments? Mr. Parker's view, therefore, makes the authority of Plato quite as great, as a teacher of a future state of rewards and punishments, as that of Christ; and as, *on the whole*, I find a much better view of *justice* in the "Laws" of Plato than in the Old or New Testament, I prefer setting these aside *altogether*, and at once stating that I think mankind in general would be happier in following the same course; since, either on Mr. Parker's view of Christianity\* or mine, a future state of being is reduced only to a *probability*.

So far we are equal; but I conceive I have an infinite advantage over him, because in adopting the Natural Religion of Plato, I get free *in toto* of that latent spirit of persecution, which we have already seen, attaches always *more or less* to a belief in *any* form of Christianity.† In this respect, while I give Mr. Parker's system credit for

\* Another point on which I cannot exactly agree with Mr. Parker is in his estimate of human nature. I am afraid he thinks too highly of this. (See introduction, p. xxv., and p. 77.)

† Philosophically considered, this makes Christianity the inveterate and *incurably* mad foe of *justice*; and thus its advocacy even of charity becomes *really* pernicious, instead of being (as it is considered by superficial thinkers) its great merit. You need only look at the tendency *many* children, and also *grown up persons*, have to *begin* injustice, and when we consider that Christianity would have us be *charitable* to these, its tendency actually to *increase* the amount of injustice in the world is clear.

Perhaps the account of the Devil's entering "the herd of swine," by which means a man lost his property, may be justly cited as evidence that Christianity tends actually to

less evil than *any other* view, I cannot exonerate it altogether, since his followers will always, no doubt, be comparatively few, and missionaries—whether Protestant or Catholic—who go among ignorant and barbarous savages, will ever, no doubt, continue to do as they have already done, viz.. to preach the scriptures as the *inspired* word of God.

In reading Mr. Parker's *Sermon on Practical Theism*, (*Op. Cit.*, pp. 125-149,) I find not one word about the superiority that *his* view of Christianity possesses over this of mere Natural Religion. I confess I am induced to regard such silence as a proof, or least a presumption, that Mr. Parker is, *in reality*, himself only a *Theist*; and that, like his distinguished predecessors—Washington and Jefferson—he thinks the scriptures should not be put aside *altogether*, as the belief in them by the multitude may be a *public good*. With great respect for Mr. Parker, it is because I cannot share in this opinion that I have written as I have done.\*

*favour* injustice and dishonesty. Particularly as no where does it exhort to justice, but only to charity.

Again, unfortunately as Christians should return good for evil, they too often determine to *be beforehand*, and give evil unprovoked! Our holy religion scarcely notices this gross injustice as sin. *Before* being injured, annoyance or injury is nothing; 'tis *after*! that we must turn meekly our cheek.

\* I observe at p. 281 of his work, that Mr. Parker considers the idea of a finite God as an injurious tenet; and his reason for this is, that it has commonly caused priests to make the Devil a more powerful being. But if we believe in the Devil only as a fable, then it seems rather advisable to believe in a finite God; for, unless we do this, (and with Plato regard matter as a sort of Devil offering obstruction to a perfect creation,) we can scarcely make out by reason a truly benevolent deity—in fact, a *Moral Power*.

6thly. — In reviewing the *pros* and *cons* in favour of Christianity, as *useful* to the world, the annoyance or inconvenience caused by the strict observance of the Sabbath is, perhaps, a matter of secondary consideration to many. But it must be remembered, that the absence of Sunday amusements, and also of slight Sunday labour (see *note* below since added in reference to the labourer fined), FALLS HARDEST ON THE POOR MAN, and that this hardship, so to call it, may be considered, as at all events, an *indirect* consequence of a belief in the scriptures,\* since on account of the ambi-

\* But a most important objection to our puritanical observance of this day is, as the *Times* lately said, (without censure of course), that “the debtor walks free on a Sunday, and on that day, no corn is carted, though it may possibly be very wet on the Monday.” In accordance with this, I observe that an old labouring man is fined 12s. 6d. for mowing *his own* field on that day. (*Observer*, Sept., 1855.)

So under the cant of religion, even our government permits an actual injustice to creditors; clearly imbued with the bad spirit of the religion adverted to lately in a note, that it prefers “charity”—(*i. e.*, a perversion of *real* charity) to justice. If there was any really *good religion* as to our Sabbath law, why are spirits and beer allowed to be sold on a Sunday evening? They no doubt, bring a revenue to government; but of course, in many cases, cause drunkenness. And while all this is permitted, “by the 21 of George III., it is enacted, that no house be open for entertainment or amusement, or publicly debating on any subject.” (Cox, p. 334.) So that even quiet rational debate “*De Officiis*”—on the moral duties of life,—or on the nature of justice—is illegal in what we call our free and religious country! More strictly “religious” than moral, no doubt. Ye glorious shades of the ancients, who spent your whole lives in the search after the honest and the just, and found even these too short for your enquiries, what must ye think of this separation of religion and morality! Modern civilisation, indeed! it consists only in our steam engines and railroads. I may conclude this note by adverting to *another positive injury*, that this puri-

guity in the meaning of these, Puritanical or Calvinistic Christians will probably always exist, and will attempt to show by scripture, that the puritanical observance of the Sabbath is the Christian's duty.

When in 1681, Penn was made sovereign of the settlement in the United States, by Charles II, he required that the inhabitants should only acknowledge their belief in the existence of God, and fulfil all the duties of civil society, and that they were left at liberty to join in public worship or not. (Voltaire's *Phil. Dict.*, Art., *Church*.)

It is singular, that in a colony belonging to a monarchy with an established church, perhaps more toleration in religion was then allowed by opinion, than at present under a Republic.

Voltaire properly prefers such toleration to that allowed by Locke in his constitution for Carolina.

tanical Christianity has inflicted on mankind, and consequently, I may also put this evil along with those which Christianity itself has inflicted, since while it exists, there will no doubt always exist some sects who will embrace such puritanical view of it.

I allude to our refusing in Britain, equally as they do in the "States," to have medical examinations of the public women. Religion, as it is called, is at the bottom of this false delicacy with us no doubt; for since even fornication is such "deadly sin," and as the existence of siphilitic disease may tend in a degree to stop fornication, our government being founded on such views of religion, will not sanction the examination in question, as they do on the continent, where there is less *profession* of religion. I allude to this point chiefly, because the disease in question being more or less *hereditary* as all medical men know, the innocent are made by such false religion to suffer for the guilty. (see *Lancet*, 1847.)

Again—without pretending to justify Lord Nelson *in toto*, it is clear the country was unjust to his innocent daughter, chiefly in consequence of our Christianity.



In this, "no *public* religions, but such as were approved of by seven fathers of families, were to be permitted." (*Op. cit. idem.*)

Religious toleration, (if changed) has probably rather diminished, than increased in the United States since the time of Penn—since the theatres remain closed on Sundays in all the Protestant States. As this depends on a *majority of votes*, it seems strictly constitutional in this sense; but in point of *religious justice*, it may be fairly considered, that the Catholic part of the population—though of course in the minority—should have the power of keeping one theatre open for themselves, otherwise all religions are not equal in the United States. If it be said, on this principle, Mahomedanism *and its polygamy* might be admitted as equal to Christianity; I reply no; because polygamy is contrary to the *civil law* of the country, and besides, this would be altering the *idea of duty* between the sexes. But merely giving a religious community the power to pass the Sabbath according to *their interpretation* of scripture, when such interpretation *does not alter the idea of duty or justice* among the sexes, is altogether different, since theatrical representation does not infringe upon any of the *practical duties* of life between man and man, or man and woman.

Besides, be it remembered, that the *Protestants* of Germany, (the country where Luther arose), have their theatres and public ball-rooms open on the Sabbath evenings, when divine service is over.



## LETTER III.

CITIZENS,—I shall now proceed to consider the *good* that Christianity, with the *greatest show of reason*, may be considered to have done in the world, and weigh this against the evil already spoken of.

1st.—As despotism or a government nearly *allied to it*, must always be that of the *vast majority* of mankind, does not Christianity exercise a salutary influence in checking the licentiousness of absolute power?

2ndly.—Has not Christianity tended to abolish animal and even human sacrifices? and has it not, as Paley (*Evidences*, Chap. vii.) says—tended to diminish the horrors of war by increasing humanity to captives? And has it in reality produced some other good effects he mentions?

3rdly.—Is not the inculcation of the *certainty* of a future state of rewards and punishments, one good it has done?

In reference to the first point, it may be observed, that when we consider the atrocities of Nero, Caligula, and *id genus omne*, of Roman Emperors, and compare such conduct with the course of life of the Emperors of Russia and Austria at the *present day*, the advantage on some points is so much in favour of these latter, that *at first sight*, we are apt to say this difference can only be owing to the Christianity of our days.

Some years back, I took this view myself; but that it is not the correct one is shown when we reflect that the atrocities of our own "most Christian" Henry VIII. rival those of the Roman Emperors alluded to. *At the present day*, then, we have no more Henry VIII.'s in England, nor even in Russia or Austria, on account, not of the Christianity of Europe, but because of the *spirit of the age* dependant on the *progress the arts and sciences have made*—those real and true civilisers of mankind. That *mere* Christianity cannot civilise, is shown by the barbarism of the Abyssinians of the present day, who have long been Christians; it is shown also by the barbarism of the "Middle Ages," still more eminently Christian. Nobody doubts the Christianity of Calvin; yet we find a follower of the lowly Jesus ordering Servetus to be burnt, because he differed from him merely *in the interpretation* of the scriptures. In like manner, as in the Spanish Inquisition, we have evidence of atrocious murders committed by Catholics on Protestants: so even under the Protestant Elizabeth, we have similar, though less numerous instances, as the Rev. Sidney Smith (a Protestant) justly says,\* of Protestants ordering the death, or expatriation and confiscation of the goods of Catholics. These, no doubt, are deaths and persecutions on account of differences in religious opinions; but as the

\* Letter on the Catholic question—quoted in Cox's work, from p. 462 to 467. The whole number of Catholics who have suffered death in England, for the *exercise of their religion!* since the reformation, he makes to be 319, 204 of these being under the reign of Elizabeth, so that Lord Brougham in his *Political Philosophy*, p. 263, vol. III justly says, this is proof how little real progress in "constitutional liberty" was made even in her reign.

whole of the criminal jurisprudence of these ages *still Christian*, was equally despotic and severe,\* it is a proof that it is not Christianity but the *spirit of the age*, that makes the despotic power of the Emperors of Russia and Austria at the present day, less formidable than was that of the Roman Emperors.

Another cause for this, still quite independant of Christianity is, that in modern times, despotic power is restrained by the division of Europe into different States, some like France, Switzerland, and our own country, governed with a greater or less degree of liberty. The consequence is, that public *opinion* emanating from these, influences or restrains any disposition to very gross acts of tyranny and injustice in the more purely despotic Empires. But, as Gibbon says—since Rome, under the Emperors comprised the whole of the known civilised *world*, the despotism of a Nero could receive no salutary check from the opinion of foreign and independent States.

Lord Brougham (*Political Philosophy*. Vol. III., p. 164. London, 1846.) says, in reference to this point, (and *mark he does not place Christianity among the causes*), “It is quite impossible that in any government, however despotically framed, the sciences, the arts, the learning, the moral and political knowledge of the people should increase, and with these their comforts, possessions, and enjoyments, without the wish being communicated to them of bettering their conditions politically. \* \* To imagine that if Turkey were completely civilised, and men possessed the wealth and the knowledge† that bless Western Europe even under

\* Torture and death were common for comparatively slight offences.

† We find here he says “knowledge,” and justly; for

its most absolute monarchies, a Bashaw could be sent into any province to enrich himself by plunder and confiscation, securing impunity by suffering the common master to pillage him in turn, is wholly absurd. \* \* It is not going too far to affirm that the Sultan, it is certain that the Bashaw of Egypt, rules by himself and his officers very different from the Tamerlanes of a former age. Compare the mild reign of the present Prussian sovereign with that of his predecessors a century ago, and you will be satisfied that however little the form of that great military monarchy has changed, no prince royal could now be called forth to see his favourite strangled beneath his window for the gratification of a father's splenetic humour. No Baron Trenck could be immured in a dungeon

I have always maintained, although their polygamy is an evil, that the main cause of the decline of the Turkish Empire, is in their not having favoured the progress of the *sciences*; for *now* the art of war depends more on chemistry and mathematics than it did formerly. Religion has had nothing to do with it farther than that Christianity, in recommending as it does, ignorance and self-abasement, has *never been followed* by Protestant Christians, or even by Catholic Christians in France. Had Christianity been followed *to the letter* it would have kept mankind in a worse state than the Mahomedan religion has kept it. The Emperor of Russia has encouraged the progress of the sciences, and well I remember meeting at Constantinople a professor sent out by him to explore and write about the unknown parts of Asia Minor. So that no doubt this gentleman returned home with more information about the country than the Turks themselves who lived there. "Ignorance is the mother of devotion," and though I don't think the Koran is more inimical to knowledge than our Scriptures are, still, in consequence of their ignorance, the Turks having had *stronger faith* in it, have followed their religion more to the letter, and, consequently, to their own disadvantage. The absolute Russian Emperor's religion, like our own, is followed only so far as interest or expediency dictates, though, of course, *professed* to be followed to the letter.

for twenty years because he found favour in the eyes of a princess. Russia is as despotically governed as any European prince could now venture to rule his people ; yet there is no possibility of a Czar beheading his mutinous guards with his own hand, or of a prime minister being sent in the night to Siberia with his family, because a new cabinet had been called into office.

“ The first step in the general and inevitable change has been made in all these countries. The government generally remains the same, but the exercise of absolute power is tempered and restrained by the *improved spirit of the age, by the force of opinion abroad as well as at home*, and above all, by the great improvement in the *knowledge, manners, and character of the people* over whom those governments are established.”

I may observe that the *father* of Frederick the Great, who ordered the unjust execution alluded to, was so pious a Christian, that he obliged a Unitarian to be imprisoned for his heresy ; \* yet Nero himself could hardly have behaved more brutally or unjustly than the Prussian king in ordering the execution in question.

Further on in the same volume, Lord Brougham, after noticing the abominable murders (so to call them) committed by order of Henry VIII., *viz.*, of Bishop Fisher, Sir Thomas More, Dr. Barnes, Cromwell, and others, male and female—makes the following statements, which will fully bear us out in our argument, *viz.*, that the atrocities committed by some Christian kings, often in reality for causes quite independent of differences in religious faith, have been quite as unjustifiable and

\* See *Life and Times of Frederick the Great*, in 4 vols edited by Thomas Campbell. (Shoberl, London.)



criminal,\* as many of the acts of the worst of the Pagan emperors of Rome. Hence, whatever amelioration there is *now*, must not be ascribed, *as is insidiously and falsely done by most writers*, to Christianity, that religion having existed in even stronger force then, than it does at present.

"The king," says Brougham, (p. 255), "by proclamation, might make any opinion heretical, and *might denounce death* as the penalty of holding it." And to increase this infamy, Cromwell and Barnes were "allowed no hearing;" the imputed "treason and heresy" of the former only beginning to appear when Henry VIII. got tired

\* Under the tyranny of the Norman governors, "the Saxons in 1124, particularly, were despoiled of their possessions, then butchered. Whoever had any property lost it by heavy taxes and unjust decrees." (Hallam's *Middle Ages*, Chap. viii., p. 31.). So "Peter the Cruel of Spain, (1350.) is said to have murdered his wife, most of his brothers and sisters, with Eleonor Gusman their mother, many Castilian nobles, and *multitudes* of the commonalty." (Hallam's *Middle Ages*, chap. iv., p. 277). So "Charlemagne, (A. D. 800), ordered 4000 Saxons to be beheaded in one day; and (to recur to the *bad* effects of Christianity), pronounced pain of death against those who refused baptism, or who ate flesh during lent." (Do. p. 9.) A proof that force of the *strongest kind* was used at that time to convert to Christianity. We find too that the sovereign, "rather encouraged, and *the clergy for the most part approved*," of that gross injustice, trial by combat. (Do. p. 134, note.)

"During the time that a crusader bore the cross, he was free from suit for his debts, and the interest of them was entirely abolished. He could not be impleaded, except on criminal charges." Such was the *spirit* of legislation due to Christianity; not much restraining murder in these ages, and greatly (p. 24.) *encouraging* such injustice as would not for a moment have been tolerated by the good Pagan emperors, neither would dispensations from oaths; and we find Edward I. seeking such from Clement V., who grants the king power not to observe his oath in reference to arbitrary taxation. (Chap. vii., p. 411.) So also Henry III., chap. viii.

of Anne of Cleves, whom Cromwell had recommended him to marry. This word "heresy," so misused indeed, gave the hypocritical tyrant a show of reason on his side with the ignorant multitude, which might contribute to strengthen his power with them—the most numerous class, and which moral power, the Roman emperors neither got, nor tried to get on their side.\* Accordingly we find this monster, quietly having his own way to the last, (above thirty years,) and dying a natural death! while some of the worst of the Roman emperors—as Caligula, Nero, Tiberius,† Domitian,

\* The Romans saw, after the murder of Caligula, how difficult it was to produce that *unanimity* essential to a republic, and accordingly Claudius was almost forced against his will, to succeed as emperor. (*Suetonius. Claudius.*) The army, generally speaking, preferred the "Empire;" they elected those they pleased, and if the new emperor became very bad, he was assassinated. Doubtless the army in this, had too much power; but still it was a system of *wild* justice; and being in some little degree *elective* kept up the *idea* of liberty, (and men are governed by words), which idea was supported by their assumed right, if he proved bad, of putting him aside by death.

† This emperor reigned, indeed, twenty-three years. living seventy-eight years; and was smothered by Macro. But even Tacitus says, that "he was amiable when a private man, and esteemed under the reign of Augustus." (*Annals vi. end.*) It is also to be observed, that for *many* years, (at least nine), after he became emperor, he governed with great moderation, and assumed humility, refusing twice the title of emperor. One of the worst laws in his reign, (but acted on slightly towards the close of the reign of Augustus,) as far as the *great majority* of the people were concerned, was the system of "informing," whereby a person might be arrested for mere *words* of disrespect towards the emperor. But even in this case, Gibbon tells us (chap. xlv.) that, "when they committed suicide to escape capital punishment, *their wills were valid*, and their act was applauded."

These reflections will account in a measure for so long a reign; and without attempting to justify many of the acts

and Commodus, at least suffered a just death by the hands of their oppressed subjects. I maintain, therefore, that since these monsters were *made to suffer for their crimes on earth*, the Roman popu-

of the latter part of this emperor's reign, it is obvious that his suspicion and hatred of mankind, began on the solid grounds of the poisoning of his worthy and innocent son, and was subsequently strengthened by the conspiracy of Sejanus (the man whom he had loaded with honours) against him. As he was sixty-six or sixty-seven when he went to live at Capri, it may also be asked, whether the accounts of his licentiousness there, were not a little (to say the least) exaggerated?

It is worthy of observation, that Pliny the younger, and the moral Tacitus himself lived during the whole reign of Domitian, (fifteen years), we may *almost say* at court; for Murphy observes, (p. viii.) both of them "rose to eminence" under him. It may, therefore be asked, whether the crimes, even of this man, have not rather been overcharged, or would it have been *possible* for a person like Tacitus especially, to suffer "his fortune to be advanced" (Murphy) by him? (See my remarks on the reign of Domitian.—*Roman Emperors*). On this subject we must never forget, that even under the *worst emperors*, there was no *religious* despotism. Tacitus complains, in reference to "informers," (book i., sec. 72), that "till the *latter part* of the reign of Augustus, men were arraigned for their actions, *but their thoughts were free*." But these "informers" were not *anything like* so intolerable as "*inquisitors*," and much more justifiable, since they arose from the *natural tendency of all power to wish to keep so*. The ancients then were free even from the milder *inquisition by opinion of Protestantism*. Besides, we have already seen, that the *natural liberty of man* in regard to suicide was respected; and it is singular, that there was a mixture of *quasi* generosity, even with the very crimes of Tiberius and Nero, in this respect, for says Tacitus, (An. vi.—29.) "those who waited incurred a forfeiture, and were deprived of sepulture, while to such as died by their own hand, funeral ceremonies were allowed, (in my late quotation from Gibbon, this favour is not named by him, yet it should have been), and wills were valid." Such," adds Tacitus, (in the spirit of an ancient Roman, applauding such liberty), "was the reward of despatch."

lation was not as a whole so oppressed by them as our population was under the *Christian* Henry the VIII. This view again, is generally completely overlooked by our *ex-parte* Christian historians.

In allusion to the Star Chamber under this monarch, Brougham justly observes;—"Not only did the Plantagenets and Tudors commit to prison, or ransom for heavy fines, those against whom they conceived an ill will, thus signally violating the most remarkable provisions of the Great Charter; but they exercised a like control over Members of Parliament who had offended them, and jurors who had given verdicts displeasing to them. A capital jurisdiction was never exercised by them, at least, directly; *but it really amounted to the same thing*, whether they sentenced obnoxious men to death, or compelled timid jurors to find them guilty through dread of personal consequences." (*Op. Cit.*, p. 258).

No doubt, it amounted to the same thing. Even after the monster had *reigned thirty years!* and separated from Rome, as he called it, five years, "his submissive parliament," enabled him to pass the "bloody act," in which it was stated, that "if any person once denied the real presence, *though he afterwards confessed his error and recanted*, he was liable to be burnt."\* (*Op. Cit.* p. 262.)

I may observe, that bad as such "informing" was, it still tended, as respects suicide, to keep up the Roman courage. "That act was *never*" (says Murphy) "punished by law, or opinion, among the Romans." Antoninus, however, in the case of a convicted *criminal*, punished it by confiscation; and if a man had been guilty of murder, &c., this was a wise and just check on it.

\*. Voltaire's opinion of the Parliament of Henry VIII., and the king himself, is similar to that of Brougham. "He had his brother beheaded," says he, "for incest, when



The "submissive parliament," in such a case, was, as already hinted at, an advantage to a bloody despot, which the Roman emperors had not, since it gave a certain *degree of moral support* to the greatest villany. Men are far better off under an absolute despotism, than under a *hypocritical* mixed monarchy, in which the parliament has *in reality* no power; for in the former case, even the most ignorant know at once the origin of their ills, and can sooner or later find time or opportunity to strike accordingly, as we find they did under some of the worst of the Roman emperors. Nay, as the impunity with which this English monster reigned, was probably much more owing to the influence of the Christian priesthood in the country, than to actual fear of his subjects to revolt, we have here an instance probably of the baneful effects of this religion on a despotism, rather than the contrary. It was the duty of the clergy, no doubt, to read as the direct command of God — "Thou shalt do no murder," and also (Romans xiii., c. 2.) "be subject to the higher powers; for the powers that be are ordained of God, \* \* and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation." So that under such circumstances, an ignorant population might actually have the desire to injure the crowned monster, taken away or diminished, even if it had the courage.

"The experience or the humanity of the last century," says Professor F. W. Newman,\* "has

there was not *the least* proof of guilt." (*Essai sur les Mœurs*. Henry VIII.)

\* *Contrasts of Ancient and Modern History*, p. 79.—Taylor, Gower Street; and Holyoake, Fleet Street, 1847. For my part, I will "contrast" Henry VIII. with any of the worst of the Pagan Roman emperors, and of the two, I



led moralists and all educated persons, heartily to renounce the ancient and once current doctrine of *Tyrannicide*, and upon this has followed the adoption of milder measures towards unconstitutional statesmen. *Men possessed of arbitrary power are no longer driven to despair*: and even the unprincipled become less dangerous."

Although Professor Newman does not mention Christianity, yet it seems probable that this has, in the case in question, really had an influence; for surely Tyrannicide is anti-scriptural, and it has not been so common for only "one century," but for many, as it was under Paganism. But when reflecting on the conduct of Henry VIII., I cannot agree with the learned Professor, that the change in opinion on this matter is an advantage to the community.\* Probably he is right in the Roman

think should have preferred their rule. Under such government, I should at least have avoided that most disgusting and annoying spectacle of *every day occurrence*, viz., the sight of people really or only hypocritically *religious*, and whose religion taught them that it was *right* to "obey a ruler," however great a villain he might be! The Pagans, at least, were free from such insensate cant. "The distinction of spiritual and temporal powers," says Gibbon, (Chap. xx.). "which had never been imposed on *the free spirit* of Greece and Rome, was introduced by the legal establishment of Christianity." According to the same historian, (Chap. xvi.) even the Jews, (even after their frequent rebellions), were probably still better off than they are now under our government, since under Antoninus Pius, they "could enjoy municipal honours, &c., &c.," whereas a Jew cannot sit in our parliament.

\* As since 1847, the Professor seems to have become less inclined to adopt even the Unitarian view of Christianity, it is not impossible, that if the work quoted reappears in a second edition, he will modify this and many other opinions in it, which appears to me inseparable from even the Unitarian belief of Christianity.

and Greek tyrants having been driven "to (the ferocity of) despair" by it; but still, as I apprehend, the crimes of Henry VIII., (though necessarily on a smaller scale as being in a smaller country), are fully equal to those of the worst of the Pagan Roman emperors, I think as the English people could not have suffered much more by such "despair" they would have been better off in not having regarded Tyrannicide *in such a case*, as a heinous sin.

On this point then, again, I insist that Christianity has, in reality, been actually disadvantageous to the world; though I would by no means be understood as considering Tyrannicide justifiable, except in such extreme cases as those of a Henry VIII., a Nero, or Caligula.\* Nor even,

\* Another point that suggests itself is, the *very* short time, (as likewise Elagabalus after him), that this emperor was allowed to pursue his enormities, *viz.*, only four years, being killed at the age of twenty-nine; and even the first years of this short reign were passed in doing good, *viz.*, suppressing "informers," and by repealing some of the unjust convictions produced by the suspicion that poisoned the mind of Tiberius in his latter years. Again—though Nero, at the age of thirty-three, was forced to suicide, and reigned (like Domitian) 14 or 15 years, yet all agree that the *first years* of both these emperors also, were passed in doing good to the empire. It was the same with Commodus, who only reigned fourteen years before he was killed, and probably would not have been tolerated so long, had he not been the son of Marcus Aurelius, for his *unprovoked* cruelty was abominable. I assert then, that *the reign of all the really bad Roman emperors was, comparatively speaking*, short; and even the one (Tiberius), who reigned like our Henry VIII., above thirty years, did not, like him, die quietly in bed. To be sure, now and then, some of the good emperors (as Pertinax and Aurelian) were assassinated; *but not more frequently than happens in Christian times* and the long reigns of Augustus, the Antonines, Trajan, Adrian, Septimius Severus, and Diocletian, show, that the

indeed, with such characters as these, *if the government be sufficiently strong* to punish them by exile, as the French government proved itself to be in the case of Charles X. and Louis Philippe, and subsequently (in reference to the people) under Napoleon III., in the case of the exiles to Cayenne. Professor Newman's opinion, then, and my own, on this head, may not be different, supposing by "milder measures," he means exile; but not so, if he would advocate the Christian system taken literally, *viz.*, *unconditional* submission as a duty.

It is fair, however, to state in reference to this point, that as some degree of good seems inevitably mixed with the bad in all sublunary things—in all schemes of government, and in all religions—so it must be admitted, that the same Christian influence which has diminished Tyrannicide, has also been far more beneficial in rendering it *more difficult* for a despotic ruler to take away the life of an innocent man, than it was formerly under the Pagan system. He must at present pursue the more *round-about plan*, and often be obliged to *diminish* the number of his victims. I do not, however, apprehend, that this good can be put in competition with the evil produced by the *very same* influence, *viz.*, the prohibition of Tyrannicide, *under any circumstance whatever*, and also of *Infanticide*, where infants are born even in a state of deformity. *On the whole*, I must decidedly place the greater respect to preserving human life among the evil effects of Christianity.

Turning now to the question, whether Christianity has not effected good by abolishing animal

assassination of the good was perhaps even still less common than under Christianity. Had Charles I. and Louis XVI., been less humane, they would probably not have been killed.

and even human sacrifice, I am *inclined* to reply in the affirmative, considering the world generally, and *not the Roman empire in particular*. Paley,\* on this point, merely says :—"It has suppressed the combats of gladiators, and the *impurities* of religious rites." He does not advert in any other words to the abominable *human* sacrifices that prevailed, more or less, all over the world before its introduction. At Carthage, among the Druids, the Hindoos, &c., the introduction of such a religious system as prohibited these sacrifices was obviously a benefit, and though Mahomedanism did the same, it was after Christianity, and perhaps borrowed from it. But unfortunately Spain in introducing Christianity into the new world, proceeded by a system of butchery which was as bad, or worse, than the human sacrifices the new religion put down.

In admitting the utility of Christianity as a general principle on this point, I have excluded, as just stated, all reference to the Roman Empire ; and as the object of this Essay was more especially to compare Pagan with Christian civilization, this is equivalent to admitting that the introduction of Christianity in the Roman Empire did, in reality, little good on this point, and for the simple reason, that the Romans scarcely ever resorted to such barbarities, and even when they did, prisoners of war (who would otherwise have been put to death) were used. As, however, when a

\* (*Supposed Effects of Christianity*.—Chap. vii.) As gladiators, *generally* speaking, were criminals condemned to death, some of them probably preferred to perish during the excitement of fighting rather than await a passive execution. This system likewise afforded amusement to the people, and *perhaps* tended to keep up the courage, more essential at that period before the use of fire arms. I am not inclined, therefore, to consider that Christianity was of service to the world in putting down this custom.



somewhat superstitious Emperor, as Aurelian for instance, came to the throne, human sacrifices might be ordered on a *severe* occasion, Christianity has the merit of having attacked the *very idea*, as unjust or injurious. However, Aurelian only ordered "some prisoners of war" to be sacrificed. (See my *Remarks on Roman History*.)

Although I am inclined to agree with Paley, that Christianity has had a beneficial influence in tending to humanize war; yet even this has been over-rated; for a change in the spirit of the age has been very influential, and also for some time, the fact mentioned by Hallam, viz., the existence of "companies of adventure, who, in expectation of enriching themselves by the ransom of prisoners, were anxious to save their lives." He adds: "Much of the humanity of modern warfare was originally due to this motive."\* Thus he informs us that, in the battle of Zagonara (1423), and Mohnilla (1467,) not half a dozen! lives were lost.

This statement of *facts* will enable us to judge of the value of Paley's *off-hand* assertion on this point, viz., "that it has mitigated the treatment of captives;"† and "*ex uno, disce omnes*," in reference also to—"It has abolished polygamy." Now polygamy did not exist under the Roman

\* *Middle Ages*. Chapter III. p. 246.

† Paley, towards the *end* of Chapter VII., "Finally, &c., &c.," introduces "perhaps," in reference to its having "mitigated the conduct of war." His assertion, shortly afterwards, that "it hath ceased to excite wars," is not true, as the late religious wars between Catholics and Protestants in Switzerland prove. He had better not have alluded to this subject, as the *less frequency* of such wars now depends on "*faith* having evaporated," as Valery says.



government, either before the introduction of Christianity, more than after; and Luther himself seemed inclined to sanction it as not inconsistent with the Christian faith. Here, then, as well as in the above case, other causes have assisted more or less in the present system of monogamy.

But some of Paley's assertions are *altogether* false; such as his quotation from Clarke, stating that "Christianity has produced a greater regard to moral obligations." He had previously himself said, "It begets a general probity in the transaction of business;" altogether forgetting "Roman faith," before its introduction. I have already said enough to show that it has produced, by its hypocrisy, *exactly the contrary effect*.

He puts down, "The influence of Christianity is not to be sought in the conduct of governments towards their subjects \* \* \* but in the silent course of private and domestic life." Certainly, it from the beginning always *seemed* to "support the powers that be," even under Nero; but it was *secretly* trying to upset them. But the truth is, it has vastly influenced "the conduct of governments;" for, when Constantine was converted, we find great changes in all the Roman laws, and often less value put on probity and good faith.

Again: "Christianity is charged with many consequences for which it is not responsible. I believe that religious motives have had no more to do in the formation of nine-tenths of the intolerant and persecuting laws, which in different countries have been established on the subject of religion, than they have had to do in England with the making of the game-laws." He then proceeds to say, that "Christianity did not *plant*" the principle which is at the bottom of all persecu-

tion, viz., that "they who are in possession of power do what they can to keep it."\*

No—but Christianity *has increased and strengthened*, though it has not planted, the intolerant principle. I no more deny than Paley that some little of this principle does good (just as does that of anger or pride); but what I contend for is that, *in regard to these two principles of human nature*, the business of the philosopher is to approve of a system that tends to *diminish* rather than increase them. He, therefore, cannot approve of Christianity on this point.

But, though agreeing with Paley, that *some degree* of intolerance "is not universally wrong," still I must continue to censure the degree of perplexity which he still further on infuses into this subject, in order *to try and make out that there is no intolerant spirit in the Christian creed*. He continues: "Believing certain articles of faith to be highly conducive, or perhaps essential, to salvation, they thought themselves bound to bring all they could, by every means, into them. \* \* \* Had there been in the New Testament precepts authorizing coercion in the propagation of the religion, and the use of violence towards unbelievers, this distinction could not have been taken, nor this defence made."

Now the Catholics, or any others that *believe*

\* This mode of expression is very objectionable in reference to the intolerant principle, for it would tend to make out, that all persons, or at least *parties*, are *equally intolerant*, which is certainly not the case. *Even when in power*, some certainly are far more disposed than others to principles of justice and toleration. But such way of putting the case shows an *ex-parte* lawyer, rather than an impartial philosopher. It seems written with the intention to introduce perplexity into the argument, and to draw from such perplexity, advantage to his side of the question.

*the scriptures*, must believe that "certain articles of faith are essential to salvation;" and this *underhand* attempt of Paley to say they do not find such doctrine there, is unworthy of him. Moreover, Christians are "bound to bring all they could" into them, for they are commanded to preach the gospel to the Heathen, and directly or indirectly made to believe that *they themselves will benefit hereafter*, by every such conversion they make. I do not say scripture exhorts them to do this "by *every* means," by "the use of violence;" yet it most decidedly advocates *mental*, though not bodily, coercion on this point. But this Paley says nothing about. It suits his side of the argument to forget that *ideas* govern the material world, and that when the strongest of all motives, viz., eternal happiness hereafter, is inseparably attached to such ideas, these must sooner or later, somewhere or somehow, *enforce* "the use of violence." Indeed, the Spanish Inquisition was not only logical, *but sincerely and piously Christian*, in attempting to enforce belief by "the use of violence," *even though this should not be found in direct terms in the scriptures*; for as *God*, in these, *commands* all to believe or to "perish hereafter," it is the *duty* of man as His creature to believe; and consequently, if he does not, it seems that a *Christian* government, to be consequent, should punish him, at all events, by imprisonment—perhaps even by torture—till he believed. As to actually *taking away his life*, even this would seem to be as justifiable as it ever can be in a *truly Christian government*, even for the crimes of robbery or murder.\*

\* As one of the chief peculiarities of Christianity is its greater regard for human life generally than Paganism, I

Again—Paley remarking and justly, that *political* fanaticism, even under Paganism, produced an immense amount of intolerance that led to much injustice and bloodshed, says, this was not due to *religious* fanaticism, and adds, “if the malevolent passions are there, the world will never want occasions.”

This, too, is a fallacious argument. The question is still, whether Christianity has not ADDED, “by the distinction of spiritual and temporal powers,” (Gibbon,) a new element of fanaticism, and that, too, *without diminishing the old one*. As it has, it has vastly added to the amount of that pernicious element—intolerant fanaticism—“planted” in the mind to be diminished rather than increased, as the Romans wisely observed when they allowed no such *spiritual* element in their institutions. Paley’s argument, then, here again falls to the ground, though he finishes with the following passage of great beauty, the *reasoning* in which is answered by the above reflections:

“Hath Poland fallen by a Christian crusade? Hath the overthrow in France, of civil order and security, been effected by the votaries of our religion or the foes? Amongst the awful lessons which the crimes and miseries of that country afford to mankind, this is one; that in order to be a persecutor, it is not necessary to be a bigot; that in rage and cruelty, in mischief and destruction, fanaticism itself can be outdone by infidelity.”

conceive that no *truly Christian* government is authorized to use *capital* punishments, for any offence or crime *whatsoever*. So called Christian governments have acted no doubt in this case from what *they consider* motives of *actual necessity* for the good of society. But, perhaps, the more perfect Christian should not even recognize this as an adequate reason, for “his kingdom is not of this world.”



As the reader will find this assertion, that the French Revolution, and the crimes that attended it, depended on a want of faith in Christianity, refuted I think fully in my next Letter, I shall only now state, that religious "fanaticism was not outdone in this case by infidelity;" because, though the atrocities committed seemed as great as in some of the religious wars, yet there is this essential distinction between them, viz., that they *seemed* necessary, in the opinion of those in power, for the very existence of the republic; and, consequently, to the improvement which was at least *attempted* in the condition of the great mass of the people by this change of government; whereas all the atrocities committed in the religious wars of Christians, have, of course, never had the praiseworthy motive of an attempt to benefit the temporal interests of the masses for their cause: no, it has, even in the best way of viewing it, been a desire to benefit their supposed eternal and spiritual interests. Now, as the possibility of this is mere matter of conjecture—however much to be wished—it is clear that there is less reason than eloquence in the passage of Paley last quoted.

"Christianity," says Paley, "has greatly meliorated the condition of the mass of every community, by procuring for them a day of weekly rest."

I have already said enough to show that the way in which the British and American governments enforce the observance of this day, render it little advantage to the labouring classes, compared with what it is in Roman Catholic, and even the Lutheran countries on the continent. Paley, himself, ought to have said this even as a Protestant; on the contrary, his way of writing might almost induce an ignorant person to conceive that



our government gave the populace wages on this day, in order to live without work. Compared with Paganism, it did no good in this respect, for Pagans had their fixed festas.

Although Paley notices the *certainty* of a future state, among the benefits promised by Christianity, yet he does not state it so pointedly as might have been expected from him.

For my own part, I should have placed this among its very greatest benefits, if, instead of rewards for mere faith, it had promised with certainty rewards for virtuous deeds. And it is singular that this otherwise useful doctrine should be preached with such certainty in the New Testament, when almost every other point, which might be useful, is left in so much ambiguity, that it loses its value as a divine command. This doctrine is vitiated, then, in another way, viz., by the presumed merit of mere faith.

When I reflect on this, I must prefer the future state proclaimed by Paganism, notwithstanding its defect of not having apparently been *so certainly* set forth as a means of rewarding virtue or punishing crime. Christianity, in this case, errs, by making that virtue, which is not so; and the same in regard to vice.

I have already been obliged to remark on the great disadvantage the *ambiguity* in the meaning of the scriptures has occasioned to the world. This has, in a great measure, been the cause of the enormous amount of slaughter between Christian sects. And, in closing these remarks on Paley, I feel myself called on again to state another evil occasioned by this ambiguity; I allude to the opposite opinions whether Christianity forbids war altogether, only in some degree, or not at all.

Paley, finding that Jesus Christ dismisses the Roman Centurion without censuring his profession as a soldier, embraces the opinion commonly held by Christians on this point, viz., that Christianity does not forbid war.

For my own part, I think he might, with the Quakers, more reasonably have embraced the opposite view. At all events, had he placed the denunciation of all but *defensive* war among the doctrines of Christianity, he would have added a point in its favour, greater perhaps than any of those he has mentioned in such an off-hand way, as though clearly preached by it, when in reality they admit of as much, or even more, doubt than this in regard to war.

Perhaps Paley, however, justly omitted it; for he could not but observe, that had he taken the *literal* interpretation of scripture (as a mere theological writer is bound to do) he would find on this point, equally as I have said in regard to a future state, a radical defect, viz., that it would *not even allow mere DEFENSIVE war*. Surely no one can doubt that this is a fair inference, when a man struck on one cheek is commanded to turn the other also.

I shall terminate this third Letter by some remarks on a writer who has written after Paley, and "illustrated" him.

Lord Brougham's Chapter on *Religious Establishments*\* comprises only about nine pages. In it we find the heads "Established Religion Incompatible with Democracy," and that "Established Religion secures Instruction." In reference to this last point, I may observe, that no doubt it does, but not always that kind of instruction which

\* *Political Philosophy*, vol. iii., p. 125.

is most desirable for the good of the community, as I shall presently show more in detail.

I shall now proceed to make some extracts which will give an idea of his opinions on this most important subject, annexing thereto my own humble comments.

1.—“ Experience proves that religion is a subject on which the bulk of men feel, and do not reason.”\* (128.) We have found, and shall find further on, proofs enough of the truth of this maxim ; and I am sorry to add in Lord Brougham’s own case. It is perhaps in consequence of a belief in this melancholy truth, that Lord B. has always laid aside his reason, *for the time*, when he has ventured to speak on the subject of religion.

2.—None of Brougham’s three objections to a church establishment (and which, be it observed, he himself refutes)† will apply to Deism, considered as the religion of the state. It is to be observed that he does not place among the objections the Dissenter having to contribute to a church establishment in which he has no faith, because this may be supposed applicable to a purely voluntary system ; “ for the dissenters,” says he, “ pay if they choose, and the persons who do pay, (supposing there is no establishment) *pay by so much the more than those who do not.*” (p. 129.)

3.—“ In several of the American Commonwealths every one was obliged to pay his tax to the state, which gave it over to the minister of whose sect the

\* And the worst feature in our “ Protestantism ” is, that it has *pretended* to use full reason on the subject, yet has only gone *half way*, and hence increased the amount of cant and self-importance with us, and in reality contributed little to the freedom of the mind.

† I say “ refutes,” because, as *he puts the case*, he does refute them, but not so in *reality*. It is all sophistry.

contributor was a member." This Brougham\* considers the only state religion possible in a Democracy. But as it compels every man to choose a sect, it might, says he, be objected to by advocates of a *pure* Democracy.

Brougham finds the same injustice in the *perfectly* voluntary principle (No. 2) that has been attributed to church establishments, viz., that "whoever wishes to save his money, will be able to benefit by the churches which his more liberal neighbour supports." (p. 130.)

But as I do not approve of a *perfectly* voluntary system, neither this objection nor the one mentioned in the last page (2) will apply to that still voluntary system (so to call it) in which a man is only obliged to pay to the form of religion *in which he believes*, or if he confess himself an Atheist, let him pay to the professors of morality in the university, whose teachings benefit him as well as the community at large. Brougham, finding that the voluntary system (No. 3) cannot be attacked on the same grounds, has, in his feeble defence of church establishments, quite left this out of his argument!

One would think on reading this section, that there could be no other form of Christianity than Trinitarian Protestantism, and, of course, no other religion than Christianity itself. Deism, or at least Unitarianism, (which yet is probably the religion of Lord Brougham, as it always has been of the leading thinkers in all ages,) is not even alluded to. Now, I maintain that his argument would have been much stronger had he said a *rational* religion should be the religion of the state, for then, as every person must, or ought to

\* *Political Philosophy*, vol. iii., p. 127.



believe in it, he will be only paying to a religion in which he has, or ought to have, faith. Every man—even an Atheist—must, in a *certain sense*, be a Deist, for he must acknowledge the existence of a *Power* he cannot wholly comprehend, or else he is mad. But when Christianity, and above all, Trinitarianism, is made the state religion, and we are required to believe in this, and also that *the morality Christianity teaches is always more just and pure than that of natural religion*, and to pay for such church establishment because it confers an advantage on us, the case is perfectly altered. The doctrine of the most heinous sins being expiated by repentance, and that unconditional submission is virtue, are tenets which tend to increase the mass of crime in the world, as Lord Brougham would no doubt admit, did his position as a peer allow him to do so. His words, then, “religious instruction, and the *moral* instruction that *always* accompanies it,” (p. 129,) are a mere specimen of the cant in matters of religion that pervades his class, and which even he—bold thinker as he is in political matters—is not bold enough to oppose. It is the same with Cobden and others—all fear to attack the Christian religion more than other *grievances*, for this is the foundation one.

We must, however, mark with care his *concluding* passage on this subject. “In the deductions which we have stated \* \* we have made no allowance for the ultimate effects of education. In no respect are these more fit to be considered than in their connection with religion. \* \* But this forms a *separate subject*, and as yet we have been throughout considering *the state of society as we at present find it*.” (p. 134.)

This extract will prepare us for the following, which is perhaps the most truly eloquent passage



in the volume. It is at the close of this that his *real views* seem almost unconsciously forced out by the momentary fervour of his soul.\*

Looking forward, like Condorcet, to the future, when "*popular education*" shall have done its utmost, he says, it is pleasing to anticipate that period, in which "graceless zealots should contend no more for USELESS FORMS OF FAITH, nor political fanatics for forms of government; when devotion to the Creator should cease to be testified by discharity towards His creatures, and WRETCHED abstract dogmas to obstruct the progress of all the

\* A truly Ciceronian passage, which should be read from the beginning. I am glad also to be able to agree with Lord Brougham in the following, where he calls bribery "the pest of corruption, which now threatens our national morals, as well as the purity of our parliamentary system, and the existence of our free constitution; nay, which makes many good men, in balancing the advantages of a free and an absolute government, *hesitate which to prefer, while they find that a popular constitution can only be purchased by the ruin of all morals.*" (Vol. III., p. 318.) These remarks were written in 1846; and our *recent* elections show that we are just as bad in respect to bribery now, viz., in 1854. Writers may talk as they please of the dishonesty pervading the United States; it cannot well be worse than among ourselves, including all ranks, classes, and sexes; there being of course many honourable exceptions in both countries. And yet with all this, the American population and ourselves are *ostensibly* the most demure and pious Christians in the world! This consideration should have induced Lord Brougham to make some free remarks on the connexion of the Christian religion with morality, instead of writing down, as we have seen he has done, "The established religion secures instruction!" I apprehend he could have found (strange to say) very little in it which tended to forbid *cheating (or bribery) or falsehood of any kind*. Charity and chastity and faith, are no doubt eulogised; but justice—the "queen of virtues"—is forgotten! Surely, after this, no candid man will say reform is not wanted in religion.

light that most improves, refines, and exalts our species." (p. 170.)

Now, I will put it to any impartial person, whether the passages which I have purposely marked in italics, do not lead to the belief that, in his sincere and reasonable moments, when unoppressed by the *conventionalisms* around him, the noble Lord acknowledges only the sublime religion of the Deist; and that he embraces the absurdity of the Trinity himself, and recommends it as a religion for the multitude, only *so long as* POPULAR ignorance continues.

Although, therefore, he has not said so, it appears he may be regarded as considering Christianity a salutary "check" on our *mixed* government, under which great ignorance prevails among the masses, and great knowledge among isolated individuals. In this view he may be conscientious, but I think wrong; but it is certain, that the state of public opinion on matters of religion in Britain, has made him far too concise, ambiguous, and I might add insincere, on this subject generally.

But as education has been so *widely* diffused among the Americans, the remark just made will not apply to them; and their leading men ought at once boldly to confess their true religious sentiments to the masses of the people.

In confirmation of what was said above, I observe the following passage, which tends also to show what Lord Brougham's real opinions are on the subject.

"The existence of a state church may therefore become much less indispensable when the people are so much improved (by education) as to remove those mischiefs and dangers, which we had occasion to contemplate." (p. 171.) He alludes to pages 125, &c.

But if a nation is to improve *gradually* in such matters, it is surely high time that our form of Christianity *for the State* should be Unitarian, and that Lord Brougham himself advocate this change (or *reform*); supposing him to hold the opinion that Deism is at present too metaphysical a religion for a *people* even perfectly educated.

Our populace were spurred, in a great measure, to the revolution under Charles the First, and also to that of 1688, by a fear of the return of Popery (Brougham,\* p. 277-291); it remains to be seen how they would receive a religion of reason *in reality*, for the present Protestantism is only so *in appearance*, and that only to the most superficial thinkers.

I cannot close this Letter better than by a reflection, drawn fairly I think from the preceding summary of Lord Brougham's printed opinions on Religious Establishments. It is this, viz., that with all our boasted freedom of the press in this a Protestant country, as compared with Catholic countries, we are still wrong in holding the opinion without admitting the exception of members of the House of Lords and of the Commons, and also the vast majority of the British nation.

I say it with no disrespect to Lord Brougham, but it is clear from the guarded and almost ambiguous way in which this writer ventures his *very freest* views on religion, that opinion has not

\* "Religious fury." So much for the blessing of Christianity to Britain. It had a great share in our two revolutions, and in its *practical* operation as regards the people and their amusements, the conquered form of Christianity (viz., Catholicism) was the most *rational* and liberal. Witness also the wars between Catholics and Protestants in Switzerland, caused, however, partly by faults in the constitution. (Brougham, p. 402.)

allowed him in this Protestant country to write as freely as Beccaria did in a Catholic country. To give only two or three examples.

“*Il suicidio è un delitto che sembra non potere ammettere una pena propriamente detta,*” i.e., that suicide does not justly appear to admit of punishment. To showing this he devotes Sect. xxxv., *Dei Delitti*.

Again—“*Allora religione, &c , &c.,*” i.e., “the Christian religion, by holding up to the criminal such an easy repentance, tends to diminish the power of human laws to punish crime.” (Sect. xvi.) This is *clearly* his meaning.

Again, in his preface—“*Non tutto cio, &c.,*” i.e., natural religion does not require all that revealed religion does.

Again—he objects to the discretionary power of the sovereign to pardon crimes. (*Idem.*, Sect. xx.)

But, above all, to show the admirable frankness and honesty of the Catholic above the Protestant writer, I would refer to Sect. xxxvii. “*Ma gli nomini, &c., &c.,*” i.e., “but reasonable men will see that the place, the age, and the subject, do not permit me to speak plainly.” He is speaking “against all attempts to use force on the mind in matters of religion, of which the sole effects, says he, are first dissimulation, then base *avilement*.” These words were written so long ago, in “a despotic and Catholic country,” and apparently too without injury to Beccaria, (who, be it also remembered, belonged like Brougham to the upper class,) *even by opinion*, as he died at Milan, and a statue has been placed to his honour on the staircase of the public Library there. They apply equally even now to the Christian oath required by our House of Commons, as the Jews

know too well. On the contrary, Lord Brougham, who could not have written as freely as the above, never hints a word about opinion not allowing *him* to speak out! This again comes from our self-sufficiency and Protestant cant—this real mockery of real liberty!



## LETTER IV.

CITIZENS,—If, in the heat of composition, I have let a few expressions drop that may appear wanting in courtesy, I beg you now not to take the same in bad part, since I am well aware that you drew your religion from the “Old Mother Country,” and that your separation from it was very shortly afterwards followed by the French Revolution, in which some of the leaders openly denounced religion of every description.

Now, it is natural for us all to respect the religion of our parents, be it right or wrong; and as it was the fashion of many writers, both here and in America, to attribute the unjustifiable scenes in France to the writings of the Deists and Atheists, who preceded the outbreak, (but as I shall show presently without foundation,) it was no wonder that during the Presidency of Washington and Adams, your more just and virtuous citizens, insisted on the recognition—at least by *opinion*—of some form or other of Christianity, as absolutely necessary to the foundation of your Republic.

But I beg you to remember that, supposing this reasoning were just in 1794, it will not at all events be so to the *same* extent now. *At that time* there was a well grounded fear that the Republic itself, even with this *supposed* assistance from Christianity, was impossible; *now* it is established beyond any fear of its falling, at all events

from *external* foes. Consequently, now seems the time for the nation which has done so much towards establishing a system of political justice, to attempt a real advancement in the same direction in matters of religious liberty.\*

On this subject Cox justly says, that in some respects "our Sabbath sanctity" took its rise about sixty years ago, when the atrocities and follies of the French Revolution, and especially the abolition for a time of the hebdomadal festival of Christians, gave an impulse in this country to unwonted strictness in the observance of religious ordinances. (Cox, p. 335.)

Again—George Combe to the same effect, (p. 338,) "People at that time thought that by such Puritanical conduct they tended to give greater security to property by preventing revolution;" and, adds Combe, "one or probably two generations must pass, before *reason* will again exert any salutary influence over religious opinion in Scotland."

Bishop Watson also was prevented by this revulsion in public feeling from introducing "a Bill for Expunging the Athanasian Creed from our Liturgy," (*Op. Cit.*, p. 338;) and so it remains there unheeded still—an example of the slowness with which *reason* always marches in the

\* The misunderstanding between Thomas Paine and Washington was also to be deplored for the interests of rational Theism; since the Americans naturally enough take the side of the latter, (as the great man who emancipated them,) and as he at least publicly (though not privately) supported Christianity, this increases the disposition of Americans to do the same, and make them think this hypocrisy is really for the public good. Although pious Christians will, of course, dislike the style of Paine's *Age of Reason*, there is no doubt of its literary merit or its reason.

world. Cox furnishes three or four pages, showing the prevalence of the same feeling, until at last we find the Scotch Assembly actually wished to prevent the population "from wandering in the fields or frequenting scenes of recreation" on the Sabbath, (p. 341,) and that too so late as 1854! What would the *rational* Catholicism of France, and let me now add Piedmont, (at least in many *practical* points,) think of such twattle? I consider, Protestants as we call ourselves, we are in very many respects behind Catholics *like these*.

It is clear, then, that Britain, even at the *present time*, has scarcely got free from the effects on her religion of that *nightmare*—the first French Revolution; and no doubt the same may be said of the United States. But, at all events, it is time they both should; and the late immense association (1855) in Hyde Park on a Sunday, to protest against all such barbarous cant, was a good omen, and an honour to the British public.

I shall now proceed to show briefly the erroneousness and *short-sightedness* of the view which attributes the revolution in question to the writings of Montesquieu, Rousseau, Diderot, Voltaire, and others.

And, in the first place, I would ask,—if these writings induced men *to act* as well as *to think*,—how is it that the writings of Bolinbroke, Hume, Gibbon, Earl of Chatham,\* George Combe, the

\* His *Letter on Superstition*, (already alluded to, p. 5,) and he too with his vast influence, as Prime Minister! As I see no notice of this *Letter* in Lord Brougham's *Statesmen*, and as one of his *last* speeches contains thoughts at least rather favourable to Christianity than otherwise, it seems right to consider this *Letter* as private; or written for posthumous publication. Would that *all* the Peers and Commons, who thought like him, did the same! and then what volumes on volumes we should have!

author of the *Vestiges*, (and others, as Paine's in a more offensive style to orthodox Christians,) though in circulation to the extent of thousands of thousands of copies for very many years past, have not been sufficient to produce any change whatever in the laws affecting Christianity in this country, or hardly even in those *usages* which depend on opinion only? A revolution in religion indeed!—why they have not sufficed, *even in those who are converts* to the rational and just views of these writers! to make the majority of such people, or even the minority, change the hypocritical system of considering music, draughts, or chess on the Sunday improper.\* The common cry with such men (in private) is, our religion is no doubt not of divine origin, but *what harm does it do?* Let us, therefore, follow it, and respect all the prejudices of the vulgar as regards the Sabbath. I will venture to say that this is still the reasoning, of at least ninety out of every hundred of *confirmed unbelievers* in Britain, such great penalties are attached *socially* to disbelief. As already observed, the same views

Posthumous confessions are better than none at all; and become a man's duty, when opinion forces us to live in such miserable hypocrisy. Volume of TRUTH after volume would surely *at last* conquer even opinion!

“*Gutta cavat lapidem, non vi, sed sæpe cadendo.*”

My chief motive for publishing this Work is to add a drop or mite, fully satisfied that thousands more will be wanting.

\* In the prospectus of the St. James's Club, opened about three years ago in St. James's Square, was printed:—No games (including the above) allowed on Sunday. On meeting one of the members some time after, I was surprised to find the house shut up, but not so surprised at the cause of it, which was, that the saintly manager who penned, or was concerned in penning, the above, was off with all the funds he could collect.

prevail in the States—upheld too by opinion only!

Now all this shows that the Anglo-Saxons are, as Parker says—in opposition to the Germans—a *practical* people. They have hitherto had an idea that Christianity *does good*, as the unbelievers Frederick the Great, Washington, and perhaps Jefferson had; and, consequently, that it is for the public benefit, that such religion should be *dominant*.

Even Voltaire, in comparing the Stoicism of the Ancients with primitive Christianity, speaks favourably of the latter; and Rousseau does the same in his *Emile*. Voltaire's satire was aimed chiefly at the *Catholics*; and Rousseau's eloquence directed rather against the *truth* than the *utility* of the creed. Accordingly, his apostle Robespierre was very tolerant to Christians, and all who professed *religion of some sort*, even when himself advocating the Deistic form of worship. The massacres which took place while he was in power and cast such a blot on his name, seem the offspring of fear and suspicion, in consequence of the want of confidence in the strength of his own government. Certainly religion was scarcely at all concerned in them.\*

\* Lewis's *Life of Robespierre*, (with my commentary M.S.) Robespierre's hatred was directed only against the Atheistic party—the party who had, in 1793, so *shamelessly* set up the “Goddess of Reason” in the shape of a beautiful woman crowned with evergreens, and in apparent mockery of all religious service, as well also as of Reason itself, and consequently of themselves, made it a part of this *religious service*! for the President publicly to embrace her. This blasphemy fortunately only lasted a few months; and I must consider that D'Holbac, Diderot, and Meslier, whose writings probably led to it, would, as conscientious Atheists, have been as much disgusted at such an *indirect*



Thus much by way of showing that in France as in Britain, Christianity was not, even by its *most determined opponents*, regarded with aversion as doing actual harm; for these men naturally enough, blinded by the force of *opinion* of the age, could not see it as Tacitus could in its true colours, when he called it a “PERNICIOUS superstition.” (*Exitiabilis Superstitio.*) (*Ann.*, Book xv.) Suetonius too speaks of it in a similar spirit of reprobation, and calls it *malefica*, and seems by such term to think it merited either punishment or contempt. (*Life of Nero*, Sect. 16.) These writers had clearly scarcely heard of Christ, and as Tacitus\* puts down the supposed miracles of Vespasian, he was the man to have inserted those of Jesus, *had they been known to the educated.*

Our French neighbours, though less practical than ourselves, would never have been inclined to fight to put down a mere opinion, especially when their great literary champions, Voltaire and Rousseau, told them such opinion did no harm. All in accordance with this, we find it was rather the *large sums they had to pay* such Christian priests than the Theology of these men, that most in-

mockery of their system, as the Deists themselves were at such scoffing at all religion; since they wrote in earnest, and were men of conviction, who at least saw nothing ridiculous in Deism. Thiers, justly therefore, considers it was a great change for the better when the inscription on the churches “To Reason” was effaced, and that to “The Supreme Being” substituted. But Robespierre himself fell very soon after this change, (in July, 1794,) hated and plotted against, by this Atheistic party, to the last—a proof of the great intolerance in human nature, and that Christianity does not cause it, though it vastly increases it.

\* He clearly believed in Divination, (*Ann.* vi., 22,) hence probably in *Prophecy*.

creased the discontent, as Mignet properly says in his *History of this French Revolution*. In consequence, ameliorations were made in this respect even before Louis XVI. was beheaded; and we also find before that event, that "a *majority* of the clergy, chiefly parish priests, joined the nation or the *tiers etat*."\* It is true we find lower down in the same page, that "a *minority* of the clerical chamber chiefly bishops, and *high beneficed* clergy," refused to do so, and opposed the King, whom Paine calls "a man of a good heart," when he attempted to promote "fusion" between the higher, middle, and lower classes. This took place in 1789-90, and shows that the *majority* of the clergy were favourable to a free constitution;† and that the part which opposed it, did so for the same reason that some of the *nobles* opposed it, and *quite irrespective of the question of religion*.

As the bulk of the clergy, then, joined the *tiers etat* or the popular side, at the *very beginning* of the revolution, this must naturally have disposed the revolutionary leaders, if not to friendship, at all events to a sort of indifference or *non-hostility* to them. And, consequently, a desire to upset the Christian religion and to establish another in its place, cannot be numbered among the actual causes of the revolution.

I have admitted that the more material question (to the *populace* always so) of the *pay* of the clergy, might have been so concerned. The other causes concerned were, like this, of a completely

\* Vales's *Life of Paine*. (*Steps to the French Revolution*.) p. 87.

† "The clergy who had proved themselves the earliest and steadiest friends of freedom," (viz., by junction with the Tiers-Etat.) Sir A. Alison's *History of Europe*, chap. xv.)

*practical* character, and still less connected with the *philosophy* of Rousseau or Voltaire. They were, 1 and 2, the great scarcity of bread, and the embarrassed state of the government finances;\* so that while the lower classes could not get food, the higher classes could not get money—the money owed to them by government. Add to these the Sovereign's power of sending parties to the bastille without trial, the fact that all classes considered themselves over-taxed, and that *Lafayette with victorious troops had just arrived from a successful revolutionary war in America*, and we shall have adequate causes for revolution, in any country, and still more so in the military and highly susceptible French nation.

We flatter ourselves with the idea, that no revolution takes place in Britain, in consequence, as

\* “Within six months after the revolution broke out, the revenue had fallen from £24,000,000 to £17,000,000 a year, and that at the very time when the embarrassment of the finances had been the principal cause of the convocation of the States-General. No resource could be found to meet the pressing difficulties of the Exchequer, *but the confiscation of the property of the church*, and subsequently that of the emigrant nobles.” (Sir A. Alison's *History*, chap. xv., p. 225.) This confirms what I have before said, viz., that the state of the finances (conjoined with famine and general political tyranny) was the cause of the outbreak, and *at this time* the property of the clergy was only taken, “because no other resource could be found” to meet the difficulty.

M. Mounier, Lords Jeffrey and Brougham, though differing on some minor points, may be said to agree as to the principal causes being those given in the text, and also to agree in considering the writings of Voltaire, Rousseau, and others, as little, if at all, concerned in the outbreak. Neither does Lord Brougham, in his notice of Robespierre, ascribe the *subsequent* murderous scenes of the revolution to the want of faith in Christianity of those in power. (Brougham's *French Revolution and its Leaders*, pp. 4, 7.)

our journalists say, of the "great national respect for law," and some add for religion. Now, all this is fallacy, as the unsuccessful Kennington Common Demonstration in 1848 sufficiently evinced. It is at once refuted by the immense extent of *poverty* in this country; for it would be absurd to suppose that our labourers and mechanics would not better by revolution their too often truly miserable condition—if *they thought they would be able*. Here lies the secret of tranquillity with us. *It too is material*. It is want of *power*. Our British mobs have never been able to succeed against our disciplined British military.

*Favourable circumstances* make revolutions much oftener than abstract writers. If Lafayette and his soldiers had not returned *victorious* to France, it is not improbable, even with famine and debt staring them in the face, the French might have been quiet. But here were *means* to an end. And certainly Voltaire and Rousseau might have written with the same result to France, that our own philosophical writers, formerly named, have done to Britain, had not famine and debt arrived at the same time, and caused much more *general* discontent, than a false system of Theology.

Southey was one who considered the toleration of such writings as those of the French philosophers led to the French revolution. But this is not true, said Lord Byron. "Every French writer of any freedom was persecuted. Voltaire and Rousseau were exiles; Marmontel and Diderot were sent to the bastille. In the next place, the French Revolution was not occasioned by any writings whatever, but must have occurred had no such writers ever existed. The cause of it is obvious—the government exacted too much, and the



people could neither *bear* nor *give* more. Without this the Encyclopedists might have written their fingers off, without the slightest alteration. \* \* *Acts*, on the part of government, and not writings against them, have caused the past convulsions”\*

I have little doubt that neither the *religious* writings of Voltaire nor of Rousseau, were concerned in this outbreak, as is commonly asserted. Neither certainly were the *political* writings of Voltaire; for, like myself, he seems to have advocated a *strong government*, and perfect *equality* of all religions only, and not of men. But as regards the *political* writings of Rousseau, I am not quite so certain. I think his doctrine of the “equality of men” may have tended to produce the *outbreak*, as I have admitted further on, Robespierre’s very high admiration of these *political* writings tended to increase the amount of wholesale *murders and atrocities*. But as this doctrine of equality had been advocated by Lycurgus, by Plato, by Sir T. More, (*Utopia*,) and to still further extent, and still more ably perhaps, by these men than by Rousseau, we must not put too much stress even on these political writings: and though we admit some influence to them, still this does not affect my argument, which is, that Rousseau and Voltaire’s religious (or irreligious) writings were not the cause of it, in other words that *it was not caused by a general disbelief in Christianity*.

Having made it appear clear that the theological writings of the French philosophers did not cause the revolution, we may now enter more in detail into that second most important point of inquiry, viz., whether the suppression of Christianity after

\* Notes to the *Vision of Judgment*.



the revolution had fairly began, was the cause of the wholesale murders and atrocities committed.

And, in the first place, that this was not the cause of Louis the XVI. being so unjustly put to death. (any more so than in the case of our own Charles I.,) is clear from the fact, that it was not till *after* this period that Christianity was suppressed in France.

We come, then, at once to the constitution of 1793. But, as Lord Brougham says, this was far more Democratic than the one of 1795, which succeeded it; and *both* were far more so than the present constitution of the United States. (*Political Philosophy*, vol. iii., p. 105.)

Now, if Legislators can be so absurd as to attempt to launch a people into the *wildest* Democracy *immediately* after such people have only been used to a monarchy, does it not follow at once (setting all change of religion aside for the moment) that such a people, especially those of so excitable a nature as the French, must at once launch into the wildest and most criminal excesses? Jefferson, and all the best writers, have held the opinion that people should be *gradually* accustomed to liberty. Yet in open defiance of this wise truth, the French in their revolution of 1793, *equally as in the last of 1848!* attempted to rush at once from Monarchy to Red Republicanism, or Socialism! The consequence has been they have as signally failed the last as the first time; the only difference is, that they have improved in humanity by the sad experience of '93.\*

\* I feel that Christian opponents may, with an *appearance* of justice, ascribe this amelioration to the open profession of Catholicism which was made by Lamartine and some of the other leaders of the Revolution of 1848. But still we must not forget the improved *spirit of the age*

The bloody murders, then, in this year were the consequence of a *first clumsy* experiment in new government, and the necessary consequence not of the absence of the Christian religion, but of the presence of *actual anarchy*.

In order to consider this point fully, I shall refer again to the *Political Philosophy*, (p. 116,) where we find it asserted that "the worst effect of popular government is, that the supreme power is placed in irresponsible hands. The people exercise their office, *accountable to no earthly tribunal*. Each individual, too, forms so inconsiderable a part in the body which decides in any instance, that he feels little or no responsibility to rest upon him even as regards his own conscience. As for public opinion, from the nature of the thing, it exists not, the people themselves being those whose sentiments are meant when public opinion is spoken of. \* \* The people can only dread having their conduct exposed, or made hateful or despicable *in their own eyes*, in a moment of calm reflection. This resembles rather the feeble check which *conscience* imposes upon a tyrant or a

already alluded to, and also the history of the Republic of 1795, in which a great improvement took place as regards humanity, and which Republic lasted *without any established religion at all* for some years, till it was put down by actual force on the part of Buonaparte. And, after all, the amelioration in 1848 was not all that could be wished, for there were many brutal individual murders committed, and the *mass* of the Socialists who fought against the illustrious General Cavaignac, (a moderate, rational, and honest Republican,) were perhaps in reality little better than well disciplined robbers, (if they will excuse me the expression.) Instead of many murders at the Guillotine, in *detail* so to speak, in this revolution, there were many on a *wholesale* scale, which removes our horror at them in some respect, as we seem to contemplate two *armies* fighting against each other.

patrician oligarchy, than the restraining voice of *public opinion*.\* It would be exactly the same in its operation, with that *shadowy* restraint of conscience, were it not that men are prone to suspect and distrust each other, and that people will naturally enough look forward to the *risk* that some of their own body may reprobate the proceeding in contemplation. But it is not only that the holders of supreme power in a Democracy are placed beyond the reach of censure; *they are likewise secure from all personal risk*. \* \* Their excesses may prove in the result detrimental to themselves, but they can never be visited with vengeance by the victims of their wrong. The tyrant most fenced about with guards, is always in proportion to his supremacy subject to fear—

\* In p. 118 he applies all this to the “popular leader.” “He is secure of the approval of his own side, and he looks not beyond it. For him, therefore, there exists no such tribunal as the public, and no *public opinion* can have any influence in controlling his proceedings.”

I consider all this as somewhat inconsistent with what he says at p. 121, viz., that a Democracy is often unfavourable to “free discussion in points of their highest interest.” In truth, all writers on America, as Brougham admits elsewhere, say and say justly, that the tyranny of opinion is the greatest defect of the Republican form of government. Jefferson himself calls it the “Lord of the Universe.” The President of the States, far from being too little, is far too much, under the influence of this power; by it, he is often degraded to yield to the most unjust and lowest prejudices of the mob. The great Jefferson, though a Deist, could not make *public* profession beyond Unitarianism; and no President could go further in free thought on this subject, even at the present day. However, this defect is not confined to a Republic; it will exist also in any government that *considers itself free*. For instance, in England, the power of opinion is still *greater* (as the late “beard and moustache movement” shows) than in the States on such minor points as these, equally as on religious questions.

his appointed punishment. Many an act is thus prevented, and many a pain is thus endured. \* \*

"The sufferer who is oppressed by a tyrant or an oligarchy has the sympathy of the people. This is withheld from him who is the people's victim; and this has always been felt as an aggravation of the wrongs which popular caprices inflict. \* \* The cruelty of the Parisian multitude, during the reign of Terror, was raised to a pitch altogether unendurable by their savage exultation in the destruction of those patriots and sages who had devoted the best energies of their lives to the service of the people.

\* \* \* \*

"No man dares breathe a whisper against the prevailing sentiments, (when one party in a Democracy has been fully established.\*)" \* \* The agitators in the French Revolution were only safe if they adopted the most violent causes that were propounded. Robespierre succeeded by going beyond all others, (Lord Brougham means in public executions,) in his public life." (The inference from this passage, then, is that Robespierre was goaded to such excesses by fear of the people.)

\* In allusion to this mob despotism, he asks in the next page, (121,) "Who in England will show the difficulty of carrying on the government without some nomination boroughs? No one has dared,—and why? Because the people, whose *highest interests* require full and deliberate discussion (on this point,) will not permit it to be so much as mentioned." This remark seems *far more* applicable to the question of reform in *religion*, both in England and America: yet with his usual caution on this topic, (as we shall see further on,) it is *altogether* overlooked by Lord Brougham. Even he, who alludes to "nomination boroughs," says, like the multitude in general, "let us leave the question of religion alone." I repeat, when we hear such expressions as these, we are right with Mr. Arthur Trevelyan to talk of the "insanity of mankind."



Again, at p. 182—"Nothing can be more certain than that the worst excesses of the French Revolution were occasioned by the interference of the *people* with the proceedings of the Legislative Assembly first, and afterwards of the National Convention. Hardly a day passed without some popular commotion; and it was the ordinary spectacle to see mobs enter the Hall, and demand the adoption of certain favourite measures. It was, I remember, usual to say in those days that the whole of the mischief arose from suffering the galleries to interfere with their plaudits or their hisses. \* \* The people, both in Paris and the great provincial towns, had only *partially* given over their power to the Assembly or the Convention. \* \* They accordingly were distributed in societies or clubs: they had nightly meetings to discuss the proceedings taken by their deputies during the morning: *they arrogated to themselves the right of approving or rejecting* all that was done by the constituted authorities: and they knew their own power from the physical force in their hands, well enough to rest satisfied with nothing short of a direct control over those authorities." \* \* He proceeds to say, these clubs also communicated through the municipality with the *rabble of the streets*, and the control of the government was thus in their hands. "The reign of terror strengthened whatever constitution succeeded that of '93: and the horror of mob-violence continued, not only throughout the directorial government to prevent *all direct interference of the people*, but was the main proof of the consular and then of the imperial regimen,\*

\* Brougham had previously, at p. 60, stated the same.



in *both* of which the people were deprived of *all* influence, direct or indirect."\* (p. 184.)

As neither in the above extracts, nor in any other part of his work, do I perceive that Lord Brougham even hints at the suppression of Christianity, as one of the causes of the excesses in the French Revolution, I presume I may place him by the side of Lord Byron and others who do not consider that such excesses arose from any such cause. Indeed, although in my opinion Lord Brougham speaks in far too guarded and ambiguous a manner for an impartial man on the subject of religion generally, still it is remarkable that he does not even mention religion even as a "check" upon the Democratic form of government, although he has a long section showing, in such case, that "checks" are absolutely necessary; and have properly been resorted to at present by the United States, with the same view that they were formerly by the turbulent Democracy of Athens. (pp. 99 to 167.) And, indeed, religion is no doubt with the masses a much more feeble "check" than actual law.

It will result I think from a careful perusal of the part of Brougham's work just mentioned, that he would attribute the excesses in question to the absence of legal or political checks only. At p. 101 he tells us, that triennial elections "*seem most desirable as a protection to representatives for their independance,*† and to the people for

\* I have sometimes *abridged* these quotations, where I could do so without altering the meaning. Lord Brougham and all who aim at *occasional eloquence*, necessarily say more than the exact sense requires.

† These words of Brougham, which I have put in italics, sufficiently show that Rousseau was *nearly* right (at all

their power ;" and that *annual* elections, by making delegates "mere agents," do not oppose a sufficiently strong "check" to Democracy.

In noticing the Athenian constitution, he says,

events) when he said the representative system, except under annual election, was, as regards *actual* liberty of the electors, a sort of sham or humbug. The precise words of Rousseau, indeed, are only *during election*. (*Contrat Social*, quoted by Brougham, p. 60.) Brougham, in reply to this, says, the people only *temporarily* lose some power, and not liberty. Brougham, in this remark, is endeavouring to alter the *meaning* that Rousseau attached to the word liberty. I believe Rousseau to be right in his assertion, at the same time that with Brougham, I believe that the people are much better off, and, *considering the chances of anarchy*, practically speaking more free, when such checks as he mentions are put upon their power *or* liberty, using these words in the same sense ; for it seems to me to be merely an attempt to *humbug* the people, by refining too much on words. Tell them at once, you may lose or you may not lose, (as the case turns out,) some *liberty* by the representative system, but you will be better for it. As Lord Brougham is very properly for giving the Suffrage to all who can read and write, and are not under criminal disability, (*Op. Cit.*, pp. 81-2,) I think his work would have had higher merit if he had been equally liberal in speaking truth more plainly on this subject, and also on matters of religion. But, unfortunately, under our *pseudo-Protestant* system, (itself the origin of all our cant,) the *habit* we are all more or less obliged to contract of speaking only *half the truth* in matters of religion, insinuates itself, as in our present author's case, into other subjects, and contributes to keep up the *actor* all through life.

I am not to be understood by the above remarks as agreeing with all Rousseau's political opinions. In his *Contrat Social* he seems rather inconsistent with his *Confessions*, when, in his chapter *De la Censure*, he seems to approve of having a very strong public opinion in a country. And though he seems right in considering that Theism or "religion *civile*," as he calls it, is necessary to all good government, yet I would not banish those (as he would, p. 285) who did not believe even in this : still less have "those put to death (*idem.*) who, having sworn they be

“no law inconsistent with an old one could be proposed without directly repealing the old one;—an admirable rule for any Legislature.” (p. 103.) And, I may remark, one which we ourselves should do well to observe—we, who multiply laws *ad infinitum* to the advantage of lawyers, and injury of the public. Although Lord Brougham censures the “check,” which allowed the Athenian to prosecute the author of a law “found detrimental on trial,” (p. 104,) still it may be a debatable point whether some very *slight* punishment (such as fine) should not be inflicted on the authors of some of our absurd laws, where the mere vanity of wishing to be known as a new member often prompts the illiterate man to propose a most *unjust*, as well as absurd, change.

Turning to the “checks” in the United States, we find that the one House is only elected for two years, the other is elected for six, (and that both are paid;) and that the President is allowed very great patronage and power. (104.) Further on (p. 337) the following law is stated, which, if not a check on the *people*, is, as Brougham says, a wise check on the *Legislature*. The Supreme Courts have the power to decide whether any proposition that has passed both Houses, is constitutional or not; and if considered not so, is prevented by these judges from becoming a law.

Brougham (at p. 105) enumerates in detail the “checks” on the French Constitution of 1793, without saying a word about the suppression of Christianity. Again—“That of ’95 was less purely Democratic,” (p. 105,) with the same

lieved it, acted as if they did not.” This was the unnatural Theistic *intolerance*, that caused the Atheistic party to fear and hate Robespierre so much; and is *too Christian* and tyrannical.

silence as to religion. In this we find that both Chambers were only elected for three years, and the Directors (or Presidents) for five years. (p. 105.) Hence, as in the United States, the Senate is elected for six years, this constitution of '95 was still far more Democratic than that of America, which had the advantage too of an additional "check" against anarchy, viz., the having separated from a less despotic Monarchy than had existed in France. The Americans had thus been gradually accustomed to a certain degree of liberty.

But the good influence even of this constitution of '95 (too Democratic as it still was) over that of '93, is shown by the wholesale murders and other excesses for the most part ceasing after it came into force.\* If it be said that shortly after this, (viz., in 1795,) Christianity was allowed to make its appearance again, and this was the cause of the great diminution in the amount of judicial

\* Its faults are pointed out more in detail in Lord Brougham's work. (pp. 350-353.) I do not, however, observe that he passes a very decided opinion on the unity or divisibility (so to speak) of the Executive. He, however, seems to prefer *unity* in this case; and justly, for we find in 1797 that three of the Directors (the Executive consisted of five) combined against the other two, Carnot and Barthelemy, and by the aid of military force succeeded "in *expelling and transporting*" (p. 353) many members of the Council; so that, having destroyed this party, they continued to govern the country for two years more by the constitution of '95. The advantage of unity in the Executive is shown by the present constitution of the United States; and if calculated to prevent discord among Americans, was *doubly* necessary among such an excitable people as the French. The election of many Royalists was the chief cause of this outbreak: a cause which will always continue to render the establishment of a Republic in France next to impossible. *Even America* would probably not have continued so stable, if she had at first been more than a Colony—a *distant part* of a Monarchy.



murders, I reply by admitting the fact that the people, *in consequence of their petition to the new Convention*, were permitted to frequent the Catholic churches, provided they consented to "maintain them at their own expense."\* I must admit, therefore, that at this period there existed on the part of the *government* a spirit of *indifference* in matters of religion, (since we find they only yielded to the wishes of the Catholics on this point,) in which Christianity was tolerated as well as Robespierre's Deism, or Theophilanthropism. But I cannot attribute the increased humanity, as regards the bloody scenes in question, to the influence of Christianity, because this religion was not allowed to have any *power* over the others, or to become the *national* religion, until its final re-establishment to that position by Napoleon, after he became Emperor. It is quite clear, then, that the beneficial change in question, after '95, arose from the suppression of the spirit of anarchy among the masses, by a *less Democratic form of government*—in fact, by the *direct* influence of *law*, and not by the ever indirect and uncertain influence of religion. At the same time, I will admit that, possibly this less inimical view, with which Christianity was regarded by the government, tended to make the Christian part of the population less disposed to change, or to run any chance of anarchy. Robespierre wished to make Deism the State Religion; his successors to raise Christianity at all events to a level with it. But as I do not attribute the murderous scenes during Robespierre's tenure of office to his religion, but his too great *fear of the people*, in consequence of the government being too Democratic; so neither do

\* Alison's *French Revolution*. p. 551. Again in chap. xix.



I attribute the diminution in these massacres in '95 and the few following years\* to any great influence from Christianity, which was only *just beginning* to show its head again. There are *coincidences* in the moral equally as in the physical world, which the mass of superficial thinkers are apt to mistake for *connexions*; and such has been, and still is the case, I am sorry to say, on this subject, both in Britain and the United States. It is this fallacy, put forth with all the eloquence of truth, by such men as Burke, that has contributed to keep both these nations, as Hurlbut says of the latter, (and might have said still more truly of the former,) in such "an infant state of *religious freedom*."

To show the utter absurdity of the above opinion, it is only necessary to reflect how *superior the government of the Roman Empire was under the Pagans, Augustus, Trajan, Adrian, the Antonines, &c., &c., to what it was under the Christian Constantine and some of his Christian successors. Or that of modern Prussia under the "infidel" Frederick the Great, to that of his Christian father. Now, as Christianity did not exist in these cases just instanced, of course the good government I allude to was not dependant on any supposed "humanising effect" of such religion.*

Lord Brougham in his *Lives of Statesmen* passes the warmest eulogy on the character of

\* No doubt the principle of *re-action* operated also. Even the most Democratic must have perceived that wholesale murder had been carried much further than the stability of the Republic required, and that many illustrious, and at the same time *harmless*, men had been most unjustly sacrificed, by (to put the best construction on the case) a false idea of utility. Accordingly, we find that in the outbreak in 1797 Carnot and others were only banished or transported, *and not guillotined*. (See late Note.)

Carnot, who was at the head of the French army during the time of Robespierre; and, as it seems certain that he opposed no *active* opposition to the "judicial murders" of this individual, I must here adduce this fact in favour of my argument, viz., that if not absolutely necessary, they seemed expedient, in that very critical conjuncture of affairs, and had nothing whatever to do with the suppression of Christianity. Carnot's defence, says Brougham, that "he remained in office with such detestable men as his colleagues; that he even signed the orders of execution in his turn," &c., &c., is, "that he began to administer the war department, and had gained brilliant success, before his colleagues commenced their reign of terror. That had he followed his own inclinations and opposed this, the country was conquered, possibly portioned—far more blood spilt—far more lasting disgrace incurred by the nation—far more permanent disasters entailed upon all classes of the people—than all that the terrorist executions and confiscations could produce. Was it not enough for him to know, that his retirement would certainly not have stayed the proscription, while it most probably would have opened the gates of Paris to the allies?" (p. 365.)

Such are some of the leading arguments made use of by Lord Brougham to justify the comparatively speaking *passive* part that Carnot took in the so-called judicial proceedings of the reign of terror. And when we remember, that "two Spanish armies attacked the line of the Pyrenees, that another was advancing from Piedmont; that La Vendée was in the hands of the rebels, with 40,000 armed peasantry; that Marseilles and Lyons had separated themselves from the republican government, and that an English fleet

rode in the harbour of Toulon; and nevertheless that, in less than a year and a half of Carnot's military administration, twenty-seven victories had been gained; 80,000 of the enemy slain, and 91,000 made prisoners, '&c., &c.'" (Brougham, p. 369) we must feel inclined to argue that Carnot required every possible assistance from at least wholesale banishment—if not from wholesale slaughter by the guillotine—in order to diminish the number of *internal* royalist French foes, when so many external foreign ones threatened on all sides.

This assertion is clearly true, since further on, (p. 371,) Lord Brougham says, "It is believed that at every period of the Revolution. the great majority of the French people, except in the capital were averse to republican principles; and the elections of 1797, (the first under the new constitution,) returned a majority of royalists and moderate reformers." When Pichegru, a royalist was elected President of the Five Hundred, and Carnot knew that insurrection was plotting against himself and the republican party generally, "he was still above," says Brougham, "all acts that wore even the semblance of treachery, and became the sacrifice to his unchangeable integrity," (being banished as we have already observed.)

When another revolution destroyed the directorial power, and placed Napoleon as First Consul, Carnot was recalled by him from exile and became war minister; but "he resigned the office," says Brougham, "when he perceived that Napoleon harboured projects hostile to liberty, having voted against the Consulship for life and the Imperial title." (p. 372.) All this shows the disinterestedness of the man, and is favourable to the view that the

present writer, following Brougham in this respect, takes of his *indirect* support of the reign of terror ; *viz.*, he must have regarded it at the time as a sort of necessary evil.

Sir Archibald Alison, in one of the most eloquent passages of his *History of Europe*, (vol. ii., p. 144.), supports Lord Brougham in the above view of Carnot's character, and concludes this eulogy on his "*real greatness*," by noticing the *fact* that should never be lost sight of in attempting to form an impartial judgment of Robespierre, and all concerned in the government in 1793-4, *viz.*, that France on this occasion, resisted successfully a more formidable attack—especially when the immense opposition of the Vendée is remembered, than Napoleon, with his "veterans," was able to do in 1815. "And this," says Alison, was due to the ability of the Committee of Public Safety, "and THE DESPOTIC POWER wielded by the Convention." (*Op. Cit.*, p. 145.) "Fear became the great engine for filling the ranks ; the bayonets of the allies appeared less formidable, than the guillotine of the Convention." (p. 144.)

Alison takes a fairer view of Robespierre's character, than a writer so opposed to him in religion and politics could perhaps, generally speaking, have been expected to take. "He and his party deemed the blood that was spilt essential to the success of freedom. \* \* In arriving at this conclusion, they were doubtless mainly influenced by the perils of their own situation ; they massacred others, because they were conscious that death, if vanquished, justly awaited themselves ; but still the weakness of humanity in their, as in many similar cases, deluded them by the magic of words, or the supposed influence of power motives,



and led them to commit the greatest crimes, while constantly professing the noblest intentions.\* There is nothing surprising in this; we have only to recollect, that all France joined in a crusade against the Albigeois, and that its bravest men deemed themselves secure from eternal, by consigning thousands of wretches to temporal, flames: we have only to go back to Godfrey de Bouillon, and the Christian warriors putting 40,000 unresisting citizens to death on the storming of Jerusalem, to be convinced that such delusions are not peculiar to any particular age or country, but that they are the universal offspring of fanaticism, whether in political or religious contests. The writers, who represent the Jacobins as mere blood thirsty wretches, are well meaning and amiable, but weak and ignorant men." (*Op. Cit.*, p. 209.) In a note he says, that Napoleon and Cambacérès took a similar view of Robespierre's character, "that he had not attended the Committees for six weeks before his fall," and "was at last desirous to stop the executions." (*Las Cases.*)

\* I believe they *actually had* also good "intentions;" but Robespierre's principles obliging him to live in the humblest manner, (as Lamartine shows,) he, of course, could create no fear by *moral* means, *i.e.*, by external pomp. And having not enough *physical power* at his command, (as he was not a military man,) his position was a false one, and instead of wholesale slaughter by cannon, (as used in a subsequent revolution by Napoleon,) he was driven to the same by the guillotine. The United States have wisely given great power and patronage to their president, and hence, although he has little moral power from the effect of pomp in subduing the mind, he has what is at the *bottom* of all good government, much *PHYSICAL* power. The *very democratic* French government allowing little or none of this to Robespierre, his intentions, even when noble, often became useless, and he was driven on by a sort of *desperation*, which, at times, lost sight of justice entirely.



I shall now enter into more details with respect to the war in the Vendée, and first attempt to show that Alison's conclusion against Republicans *generally*, and more especially against Deism, from the atrocities committed in this war, is not only erroneous, but incompatible with the quotation just given, in which we find 40,000 unresisting citizens were put to death by men, with all their faults, who were *Christians in earnest*\*—inclined to *practice*, what they at least conceived to be directly or *indirectly* commanded by scripture, and not of the present hypocritical and sanctified class, (I speak generally), who make their religion to consist in mere assertions and appearances, while their every day conduct is such, that it is obvious they do not even attempt to practice some of its very easiest duties.

He says, "this contest first put the cause of revolution openly and irrevocably at war with that of religion; the friends of real freedom! (*sic.*) (he should have said slavery) for permanently enlisting on their side, a power which will never be subdued." (p. 140).

I may observe here, that by "religion," he means of course Christianity; for Robespierre's Deism seems regarded by him little better than Atheism. As to Christianity "never being subdued," that remains to be seen *when it has lasted as long as the Egyptian and Pagan religions lasted.*

"Religions take their turns; 'twas Jove, 'tis Jesus," says Lord Byron. Religion *itself* "will never be subdued;" but Christianity is not this *eternal natural* religion.

"From the atrocious severities of the Republi-

\* "The faith which *then* filled the souls of men, says Valery, (*Travels*, p. 406,) is evaporated."

can's sway in this province, has arisen the profound hatred of all the believers in the Christian faith at their rule." (*idem.*)

He should, perhaps, have said Deistical Republican sway to make the sense of this passage clearer; for the Christian world seems to have no objection to Republicanism as it exists in Switzerland, and the United States, because the vast majority in both these Republics profess Christianity, and opinion is against Deism.

Alison, then, clearly means, that all believers in the Christian faith, ascribe those monstrous enormities, "the Republican baptisms and marriages," to the proscription of *Christianity* from the French Republican government at this time.

As I believe this is the general sentiment, I do not object to his stating it as such, but to his *appearing to embrace such belief himself*, after having made the statement we see he has done, in reference to 40,000 *unresisting* citizens put to death by pious Christians as they called, and no doubt thought themselves. He might, moreover, have added to these, the slaughter by Christian armies, after the taking of Mexico and Peru, &c., &c., &c.

But it is now time to make some statements, which will show that the slaughter, (I do not mean by this to include *wanton* cruelty) in the Vendée was even more justifiable than that in Jerusalem, for in the last case, we find the citizens "unresisting;" whereas in the Vendée, the people were urged on by the Priests, and resisted with such success, that they were *very near* destroying the embryo Republic itself, as the following extract from Alison's chapter on this subject, evinces:—

"Thus was the invasion of six armies, amounting to 100,000! (*sic.*) regular troops, part of

whom were the best soldiers of France defeated, and losses inflicted on the Republicans, incomparably greater than they had suffered from all the allies put together since the commencement of the war"—viz., by the Vendéans. (*Op. Cit.*, Ch. xii., p. 117.) We find subsequently, that the Republicans were successful, but the above extract will show the *immense* difficulty put in their way by the Vendéans. (See also p. 139 to same effect.)

But the *causes* of this war—which subsequently assumed all the character of a war of Christian fanaticism against natural religion, and not as formerly against Mahommedanism—were like those of the revolution itself, of a far more *material* character, than we might be at first inclined to believe. "The confiscation of the church property, says Alison, rendered necessary the laws against the refractory priests, and *thereby* lighted the flames of civil war in La Vendée." (*Op. Cit.*, p. 225.) The Christian priests then, when like the curate of St. Maria de Re, to be noticed presently, with the cross in their hands, they harangued the ignorant but loyal peasants about to combat, were seeking revenge for loss of their property,\* (in this respect, perhaps justly), as well as to revenge the attempt that Robespierre, as far as he individually was concerned, had made, to put Deism somewhat above Christianity; for he as already stated, was not of those who insantly attempted to drive all religion from the earth.

"My children," said de Re, "I will march at your head with the crucifix in my hands; let those who follow me fall on their knees, and *I will give*

\* "The levy of 300,000 men ordered by the Convention in February, 1793," was also greatly concerned, as Alison informs us. (*Op. Cit.*, p. 98.)

*them absolution: if they fall, they will be received into Paradise; but the cowards who betray God and their families, will be massacred by the blues, and their souls consigned to hell.*" (*Op. Cit.*, p. 127., Chap. xii.) Above 2,000 men fell on their knees, received absolution and returned to battle, the curate at their head, exclaiming—" *Vive le Roi, nous allons en Paradis.*" (*Op. Cit.*, *ib.*)

I have purposely marked in italics passages in this address, similar to those addressed to men in the earlier times of Mahommedanism, and equally well calculated to urge them on to far more desperate combat, than any words with which an Atheist, or even conscientious Deist, could possibly speak to them. But as every impartial man, must apprehend regard such words in the light of rank blasphemy, in which the creature assumes the power of the Creator, and of obvious fraud,\* for the sake of taking an advantage of the Republican enemy, we have, perhaps, *some little* justification for the fierce paroxysms of rage—little short of insanity—with which they must have filled the bosom of an almost beaten Republican army, and consequently for the subsequent crimes of Carrier in his "baptisms and marriages."

We find that, after the above quoted address of De Re, the Royalists won the battle, leaving 6,000 killed and wounded on the field; and that such was the rancour inspired by fanaticism, that "they seized each other and tore their bodies with their hands after the ammunition had ceased." (*Op. Cit.*, p. 127.)

\* Yet Alison passes over this address, rather with seeming approval than otherwise; so impossible is it for the most disinterested Christian writer, in the present tyrannical state of opinion on the subject, to be as impartial as he otherwise, no doubt, would be!



Alison, on a former occasion, forgetting, perhaps, what he was afterwards to assert as facts, p. 96) talks about "this superstition being of so gentle and holy a kind," and endeavours through this chapter to make out that the cruelty was on the Republican side. Admitting that it was so to a *greater extent*, the following passages will show that the Royalist peasants, with all their "holy superstition," were not always so "gentle" as he asserts. "When Machecoul was captured, the prisons was forced by a furious mob, and above eighty Republicans massacred in one day." Again, "nearly 500 Republicans fell victims to the rage of a Royalist Committee." (Chap. xii., p. 104.) Again, (chap. xvi., p. 274) "Charette stormed three of the intrenched camps, *and put their garrisons to the sword.*" Yet this was the very Charette who he says, at p. 104, "was horror-struck" at the murder of the 500 Republicans just mentioned, and a man who often "had recourse to the clergy" to instil obedience into his men, and who "took an oath to be faithful to the cause of God (as he called it) and the throne." (p. 107.)

Perhaps, from the history of this brave man, (such he was, certainly,) may be gleaned one of the best arguments to show that even the Republicans tried *to begin* by being mild, for "when he was at the head of only fourteen followers (he subsequently had 20,000 under him alone) the Convention offered him a million of francs if he would retire to England." (p. 107.) Again, (p. 108) "It is painful, said the Republican Commissioners, to be obliged to proceed to extremities, but they cannot be avoided, from the fanaticism of the peasants, who, in no one instance, have been known to betray their landlords."

After the fall of Robespierre, and the just exe-



cution of Carrier,\* by whose orders the "marriages and baptisms" took place, we find a treaty (January 1795) was concluded between the Vendéans and Republican government, in which the former were allowed the free exercise of Christianity, two millions of francs for their war expenses and various indemnities, pardons, almost total exemption from taxes, &c., &c., and they were to submit to the Republic. But even this did not satisfy them, for we find Charette, in the July following, joining other Royalists; and they were scarcely even put down by Hoche and *the great army* in 1796! (Alison, chap. xviii.) for we find them subsequently, in two years or so, breaking out again. (*Idem.*)

Thus we observe that, notwithstanding Carrier's atrocities, intended to extend the "reign of terror" to the Vendée, and only resorted to *towards the close* of that reign after other more conciliatory measures had failed, Charette may still be said to have beaten Robespierre's government! Thus, though *nothing* can justify the murder of the women and children (37,000 according to Alison, p. 207) and Carrier's other victims in the Vendée, still I have said enough to show that these murders, unlike those at Jerusalem, were caused by *most determined* opposition on the part of the Royalists, and consequently were, in *this respect*, more justifiable than these and many others that have taken place in the world.

Moreover, it is clear that the Vendéans were not murdered because they were fanatical Christians, and that the Republicans would certainly not have

\* (Chap. xix., p. 333, &c.) As "his authority was unbounded," (p. 333) of course Robespierre had little to do with the murders in this remote district, any more than his Deism had.

troubled themselves about their exercising their religion in private (nor perhaps even in public,\* though their churches had been shut by government); whereas, the 40,000 were murdered by the Christians in Jerusalem *solely* on account of their being of a different religion—viz., Mahomedans !

These reflections will at once show that the brutal murders in the Vendée were not caused by the absence of all belief in Christianity in the minds of the Republicans, as a former quotation from Alison shows us the world at large, including himself, inclines to believe; and, consequently, were, *in reality*, not near of so atrocious a character as those in Jerusalem.

And now let any impartial man go back to the following quotations, and mark the gross injustice with which one of the most impartial of the Christian writers is obliged, by his creed, to terminate his paragraph.

“After seven years, viz., in 1800, the worship of Christianity was restored by Napoleon; but a great portion of the youth of France had been brought up, without receiving any religious impres-

\* I set down this as *possible*, because Robespierre's object was merely to put Deism as the state religion *in place of Christianity*, at the same time, as I have observed, evincing a disposition to *tolerate* this latter as well as Judaism, &c. I observe, in Lord Brougham's *Robespierre*, (p. 32) that his lordship says, the effort of Robespierre to introduce Theism “was wholly unnecessary for re-establishing religion, and gained no object but that of exciting distrust, &c., among the infidel part of the community, without at all reconciling the votaries of Christianity.” No doubt such was the case as to these two latter effects, but Lord Brougham, like the other “votaries of Christianity,” would probably as soon see Atheism as any religion except Christianity prevail. Hence this indifference, amounting to injustice, to the man on this point.

sions in early life." \* \* " This, has for ever disqualified the French for the enjoyment of freedom, because it has extinguished the feelings of duty, on which alone it can be founded in the young and influential part of the people." (Chap. i, p. 47.)

Where were the "feelings of duty," when the pious Christians murdered the 40,000 at Jerusalem? *If it had not been for their religion*, they would never have thought this to be a duty. Hence it is clear, that at least *sometimes*, Christianity may come to make sincere men *consider the very greatest of all human crimes, a positive duty!*!"\* I hold, also, that "feelings of duty" are necessary to "freedom;" but maintain that Christianity gives *wrong* feelings of duty, and that they should be founded on Theism, or the reason given by God to correct any errors of conscience. On the contrary, "impressions" of Calvinism, instilled "in early life," are the origin of our self-sufficiency, cant, and really irreligious conduct in the daily affairs of life, because they cause the intolerance of public opinion.

I have already observed the Convention of 1795 repealed the law of 1793, which *actually prohibited* Christian worship. This, it must be confessed, seems a more equitable system, than the

\* Along with the *minor* vices of this creed may be noticed the following from Hume's *Dialogues concerning natural religion*. (p. 105.) "Among ourselves, some (probably he means the Calvinists) have been guilty of that atrociousness, *unknown to the Egyptian and Greek superstitions*, of declaiming, in express terms, against morality." All Christian sects do more or less, when they place so much merit in *faith*.

Another vice in Christianity, unknown to the ancient superstitions, is the doctrine of repentance atoning for sin—a doctrine still more probably, "against morality."

mere *private* sort of toleration of Christianity by Robespierre; yet, nevertheless, we can also infer from what took place after this change, the erroneousness of Alison's assertion, that the mildness of the treatment of the Republican prisoners by the Royalists in the war of La Vendée, was due to their strong faith in Christianity, since we find that *just after!* the above decree too, some of this very religious party did not scruple to exercise their revenge on the Terrorists, and "that eighty Jacobins only escaped execution, by secreting themselves." (Chap. xix., p. 348.) "At Lyons, Aix, &c., they (the Royalists) massacred the prisoners *without either trial or discrimination.*" "The re-action was terrible." (p. 347.) Thus, by the above words, he contradicts himself.\*

Humanity did not *thoroughly* begin to reign till after Napoleon and Barras had secured the *power* of the Convention by their victory over the National Guards towards the end of October, in 1795; and this humanity had little to do with religion, for many members of the Convention were Jacobins, Theists, and Atheists, and Chris-

\* The impartial reader will also observe that I have taken only the numbers as stated by Alison, (which may be perfectly correct,) without consulting the opposite, or my own party, on this particular point.

Another consideration is, that there is somewhat more excuse for the atrocities of "infidels" in this war, because they saw that the Christian party took advantage of some of the most bigotted passages in their creed to cause their party to fight well. Now, perhaps, sometimes this was from faith; but as it was also often probably from mere fraud to *increase courage*, the Republicans found they had nothing to oppose to this falsehood, but to endeavour to inspire terror into the minds of the Royalists by the *severity of the punishments* they inflicted on prisoners. The Mahomedan lie so excited fanaticism, that at first this sect conquered everywhere.



tianity was only on a sort of *level* with Theism, &c., till 1800. A more humane spirit had, indeed, began to show itself in April, when some Jacobin insurgents were *transported* to Cayenne, instead of being guillotined. The government was, however, hardly yet strong enough for such a measure, for a *successful* attempt at rescue was made by their comrades, and they were not retaken till 300 of the military had been called out. No doubt Robespierre thought that his government was not strong enough for such a measure. And such opinion might have been supported by a subsequent Jacobin insurrection, which took place on the 24th of May; for on this occasion we find the guillotine was *again* resorted to in the end of June, 1795, and that "three who tried to stab themselves were led, still bleeding, *to execution.*" (Chap. xix., p. 341.) Thus it was only, in fact, when the government came into the hands of *military* men, (Napoleon and Barras,) at the end of October, '95, that a more lenient mode of punishment could be judiciously resorted to. Thus we see that a *mild*, yet perfectly Democratic government (such as under Robespierre) is next to impossible, unless we give *military men a preponderance in the rule*, and then it is only one remove from a despotism, and is in the *power of such military men* to convert it to such, if it pleases them. Such did Napoleon shortly afterwards. This reflection will, like former ones, bring us to the conclusion that Robespierre's cruelty was necessary for such a *very Democratic* Constitution to stand its ground; and not in the slightest degree dependant on his want of belief in Christianity.\* At the same time, I will admit

\* Again to the same purpose. From October 1795 to 1800 France existed without Christianity as the established



that the attempt to suppress this by force, was very impolitic, to say the least; and, if I may use the expression, an attempt to be as foolishly Democratic in matters of religion, as they had been in civil government. Had they begun with the constitution of '95, as regarded religion, and allowed the Vendée peasants to attend Christian worship in their churches, if they consented to pay for it, we should not probably have had De Re addressing them, as we find he did, or a peasant on another occasion, noticed by Alison, fighting furiously to the last, though desperately wounded, and exclaiming to the Republicans before he fell—"Restore to me my God."

Such, at least, would have been the more just and milder system; and as it *might* have prevented so much opposition on their part at first, might, as a consequence, have also prevented the "Baptisms and Marriages," and other atrocities of the Republicans. I am not, however, prepared to speak with certainty on this point; since we find that under the Roman Empire, Christianity never was content until it had put all other religions beneath itself; and since we find that even after 1795, when it had acquired this equality with

religion, its belief or profession being voluntary. Yet during these years the "atrocities" were not repeated. But why not, if the absence of Christianity had previously caused these? The fact is, the French people acted with more humanity and justice during this period, than often subsequently when Napoleon—forgetting somewhat his splendid address, "My empire ends where that of conscience begins"—restored Catholicism. Our fanatically or hypocritically Christian Cromwell, too, sent his prisoners of war to be slaves in the West Indies. (Guizot's *Cromwell*. 1855.) Some men would have thought this a more severe punishment than Robespierre's guillotine. It shows, at all events, that Christianity in its Puritanical form, is little more humane than Theism, or than Catholicism.

Deism, and the Vendéans had, as already mentioned, obtained a treaty, the most honourable that could possibly have been granted by any government which still continued Republican and not Royalist, they were dissatisfied, and took up arms again on the first favourable occasion.

Whether, therefore, this more just system would have succeeded better may be somewhat doubtful ; but we must not probably put the blame on Robespierre and the Deists, that it was not introduced at first ; for they took the government as they found it, and it was no doubt their great enemies—the *Atheistic* party—who had been mainly instrumental in prohibiting Christian worship by actual law. Robespierre, probably, would not have dared to have favoured Christianity thus far, seeing that his restoring the worship of God only, met with great opposition from the Atheists, and was more or less instrumental in his fall.

I may close these remarks on Robespierre by saying, that while I believe the religious creed he had taken from Rousseau had nothing to do with the massacres in question, I cannot perhaps say the same for Rousseau's political creed, viz., the "equality of men." Fanaticism on this point spurred Robespierre on ; but, strange to say, this was Sir T. More's creed as a *Christian*.

I have now given my matured and settled opinion, that the enormities committed in the first French Revolution did not arise from the suppression of Christianity as the religion of the State. In a former publication, *before I had investigated this subject*, I asked—Was not the slaughter in question due to this absence of Christianity ? deeming that it probably was. This query it was that induced me to investigate the subject *fully*, in order to remove one prejudice that still adheres

to the minds even of some liberal and intelligent men on this subject, and is perhaps at the bottom of the strong respect of the vast unreflecting multitude in England and America for the Christian faith. But being fully satisfied I have said enough to show it is not essential to social order, I now close this point.

Another seeming objection alone remains. I allude to the fact that none of the enormities of the French Revolution took place in the American Revolution, and as the Americans always respected Christianity, and public opinion in the country was in favour of it, was not this the cause of the difference? Probably such is still the opinion in America—indeed, I have heard an American assert it; but that it is fallacious, is clear, not only from the example of ancient Rome, already instanced, but also from the *different position France was in at the time of her revolution from America; for here there was no Vendée with its 100,000 Royalists to oppose; nor the foreign armies of all Europe*. Neither had the Americans *Red Republicanism* for their government; and consequently they had a *Democracy more easily managed*. It is no doubt their merit to have fixed on this *less Democratic* form of government. But such choice and the above different position, aided perhaps also by a less excitable nature, were no doubt the cause of the far less amount of atrocity in their revolution. I assert their Christianity was totally or nearly unconcerned in it.

I have made this solemn appeal chiefly to you, Citizens of the United States, to know whether the *insanity of mankind*,\* as Mr. Trevelyan justly

\* A man who asserts that mankind in general are mad, doubtless will be considered to be so himself; but I agree with Mr. Trevelyan that they are so, and for this simple

designates it, is to continue for ever, and to remain incurable? In consequence of the universal diffusion of education among you, you are prepared for a really *rational* form of religion, I mean pure Theism; and if you cannot get a majority of your citizens to *confess*, what they must I think now really *believe* on religious matters, cannot you, at all events, get a law enacted for making this a state religion, to which every one of you should be *obliged* to contribute? I think the *intelligent* among you would not consider this an abridgement of rational liberty any more than Plato or Rousseau (those well-known apostles of political liberty) did formerly. I see that a Mr. Russell of Cincinnati,\* thinks you would be better for some state religion, as the poorer classes could then attend a place of worship with more satisfaction to themselves. I conjure you, then, in case of any change in your system, to make *that* religion a religion of state, which alone is worthy to be so among a really *sane* and intellectual people.

As outward forms and ceremonies in religion ever have been, and ever will be of importance as influencing the imagination, and by this the feeling of veneration inherent in the human soul, I shall here state that I think the establishment of the Theistic form of worship should by no means be accompanied with the simplicity and tyrannical spirit of order and separation of poor and rich,

reason, viz., that, compared with custom and fashion, reason has little or no power over their actions. Such madness in lesser matters is not of much consequence; but when it shows itself, as it does now, among the most civilised nations existing, in regard to religion, the case is altered. Lord Byron said, "Turn Bedlam out;" and this playful *instinct* of the poet seems almost approved by reason.

\* *England and America Compared.* Watson. Holyoake 147, Fleet Street.



which prevails especially in Calvinistic Protestantism, but, on the contrary, with all the *externals* of Roman Catholicism. In this respect, I hold this religion to be perfect; and when also accompanied with the toleration that existed perhaps in still more perfection under the reign of Louis Philippe than it does even at present in France, I could even subscribe to its *mysteries, taken in a very general sense*. It was, and still is, or ought to be, far more tolerant than our Protestantism.

I observe that the author of *Quinquenergia*,\* while proposing the Theistic form of worship—which is the only true part of any “revealed” religion—also seems in favour of the externals of Catholicism, in which much of the classical Pagan system is very properly followed. Processions, incense, splendid cathedrals,—*open, too, every day*,—in order to afford the poor and weary man an asylum and better home than his own, and where he can pray in peace, whether the priest be there or not,—such are some of the outlines for “*Deo erexit Voltaire*” establishments.

I feel the more confidence in proposing the Theistic form of worship, as the same may be said to have been done by Sir Thomas More in his *Utopia*, who seems, even *at that period*, to have thought it preferable to *literal* Christianity, and who, doubtless, had he lived to see the subsequent massacres caused by this, would have considered it doubly so afterwards.

It was probably the advantage that many passages in scripture gave to those who say that intolerance is the basis of Christianity, that led More to prefer Theism,† for he says, p. 173, “one

\* Chapman, London. 1854.

† I know that the charge of intolerance in *practice* has been brought against More, and perhaps justly; but when



Christian was punished by the Utopians because he cried out that 'they were impious and damned to everlasting burnings.' He was "banished" for thus attempting to inflame the people to "sedition;" and in *this* case I do not perceive any intolerant feeling in More, for the Christian in question uttered words without solid evidence of their truth, and which were well calculated to cause *civil discord and revolution*. Had the ancient Roman government punished fanaticism in this summary way, Christianity would probably never have upset Paganism. *Occasionally*, no doubt, it was too severe to those professing Christianity, but taken *in its whole course* too tolerant.

More would have the priests elected by ballot, and required to preach only the doctrines of Providence and a future state. He tolerates all religions, and Christianity among them, because, says he, this favours "community of goods," which he, like Plato, thought should exist in every system of *perfect*\* justice. Thanks to the ambiguity of the creed, scarcely a single Christian has ever adopted such view! Yet I think with More, that the general tenor of scripture† is to support

the passions are excited, a man is sometimes led to acts his reason condemns. This, then, is no argument against the views of his cooler moments.

\* I also hold this opinion as far as ABSTRACT justice is concerned; but maintain that such pure justice cannot be put in practice on earth on any large scale, and that, consequently, perhaps the best form of government is *perfect equality* (not mere toleration) of all religions, and strong executive power—hereditary probably the best. It is singular that this was adopted in Sparta, as regarded their King, and that even the Senators there were elected *for life*. (Plutarch. Polybius.) Thus we find a *thorough aristocratic*! principle, even in this very small *Social Republic*; otherwise, probably, it would not have lasted so long.

† It may be said such opinion of equality is incompatible

this said doctrine of the "natural equality of man."

"No prayers are permitted among the Utopians, but *such as every one* (all the different religious sects) *may use without prejudice to his own opinions.*" (p. 185.) This is admirable, and is the only manner to unite all the different religions as far as they can be so; and to reconcile different sects to worship in the same church. Dr. Arnold, when he wished to see this in reference to Protestants and Catholics, forgot the definite and often intolerant prayers and creeds which are frequently repeated in so formal a manner in our Protestant churches, as if expressly to exclude Unitarians and Catholics from repeating them. More, on the contrary, like Pope, prefers a sort of "universal prayer."

More would also justly have the different sexes occupy different parts of the same cathedral; and the young women in company with the old, to

with the assertion of "damnation" denounced against those who "resist the powers that be." No doubt: and here is *another* specimen of ambiguity. But I consider this last as a proof rather of that subservience of Christianity to the temporal power of the Cæsars at the time, which we observe in the reply, "Render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsars," &c., than to its *true and proper character and meaning*. At its origin, property was common among Christians, and all was real equality among *them*; for Christ himself seemed to order this equality, when he told the rich man "to sell *all* he had to give to the poor." It was enabled to get itself adopted by Emperors, because it seemed not to interfere with politics, and also because it seemed to sanction their *divine* right to power. But once adopted by Monarchs its doctrines of equality were forgotten, as being incompatible with those advocating "divine" right; and this *last doctrine is no doubt the cause why it has reigned so long on earth*, as Monarchs have the *physical force* at their disposal.

keep them serious. (p. 187.) Also incense, as a sort of sacrifice during worship ; and after prayers, *amusements on the Sunday evening.* (*Idem.*)

To conclude : while he thus makes a liberal Theism the religion of the State, he may no doubt be accused of some degree of intolerance in excluding, as he does, Atheists from all public offices ; but Plato, and after him Rousseau, were probably still more severe on this point.

Here, then, is the religion I propose as an answer to the infidel Lord Chesterfield's question—"Madam, what are we Legislators to put in the place of Christianity?"

I also allude to the existence of the Roman Empire—and in its greatest glory too—up to the time of Constantine without it ; and also suggest the following *outlines* as *auxiliary* reforms, premising that the *principle* of all reforms, where only natural religion is professed, will be to increase the power of the government and the police, since *some* restraint, though *very small*, is taken away when we reject revealed religion.

1.—In consequence—to consider health first—all provisions and drinks should especially be subject to government supervision previous to their sale. In England lately (1855) many of the ornaments in cakes and pastry, many fish sauces and pickles, and, less to be expected, many preserved fruits, have been found adulterated with actually poisonous ingredients, to the disgrace of our trading community ;\* and I observe in the

\* Very large quantities of alum also in bread, and chicory in coffee. Mr. Graham, in stating he did not object to this last adulteration, totally omitted to advert to the cases where poisons had been used. (*Proceedings of the British Association.*)

French journals, that five or six butchers have been justly punished for selling animals that have died by diseases, and that, too, at a time when a malignant diarrhœa prevailed. *The power now proposed ought to extend to punishing numerous ADVERTISERS of food, drinks, or medicines, where by FALSEHOOD they attempt to cheat the public.* The poor, honest, and ignorant man, is at present often fairly robbed of his property, and often of his health, by these lying advertisements.

Although it would be well that a similar force should attempt to prevent fraud in all other trades and professions, still as in these cases the health of the public is not endangered, *less* rigorous measures will perhaps suffice in such cases.

It appears that our laws against *fraudulent* bankrupts are somewhat more severe than formerly; but some recent cases which have occurred in men of large property, make still more stringent laws on this subject desirable.

2.—Rewards for virtue should be instituted as Beccaria long ago suggested. Under this head something should be done towards the adequate remuneration of those who are honest enough to restore the property &c., &c., they have found, to the owners. At present the paltry rewards given by some individuals are a disgrace to humanity and an encouragement to theft.

3.—Some form of sumptuary law seems desirable to check the immense power of monopoly, which prevents the poorer men competing successfully with the large capitalist. "If laws were made determining at how great an extent of land, and at how much money, every man should stop," at least *some* of the evils of the present system would be diminished, says Sir T. More. (*Op.*



*Cit.*, p. 71.) I agree with him, and think thus far only, Communism is desirable.\*

In reference to this point, the effect of *fixing the prices* of the necessaries of life, such as bread and meat, which has just been done by the French government, should be watched. One plan or the other ought, in justice to the poor, to be adopted.

4.—It were good that either the suggestions of Sir T. More or Lord Bacon, to prevent much of the mutual deception that often takes place in marriages, were followed. But as such suggestions seem only easily practicable in a savage state of society, we must be content to let custom remain as it is on such points. The Romans seem to have obviated the deception in question in a great measure, by the facility they allowed to divorce ; and our modern Reformers have done well in endeavouring to extend this privilege to the lower classes of both sexes of the community.

5.—Lord John Russell, in his speech on the Jewish Bill in 1854, observed that Lord Halifax formerly proposed, or submitted for consideration, the propriety of compelling the whole of the population to take an oath never to defraud their fellow-creatures, observing that, if such were law, it would not hinder us from bolting our doors at

\* With all our profession of Christianity and Christian charity, it would be desirable to know whether there is not more *abject* poverty in this country than in almost any other in Europe ? and, if so, as appears probable, whether much at least of it cannot be traced to monopolies ? As the poor man is also not allowed to do work *for himself* on a Sunday, (see Note, end of Letter II.,) it may also be asked, if this law does not contribute ? The man in this case justly said he was *too tired* on a week-day to work in the evening.



night, and taking the same precautions against theft and fraud as at present.\*

I pause to decide whether or not this suggestion might not be usefully added to the above, *in case they were found inadequate to supply the place of a revealed religion.*

I have little doubt that *unreflecting* Whigs and Democrats will say all the above is rank tyranny. Perhaps so; but never mind, so that it is not rank injustice; and I maintain such regulations would tend to cause the practice of a much greater amount of justice than we find at present existing perhaps under any government, Republican or Monarchical. As Plato said formerly, so I say now, that no existing government perfectly satisfies

\* I observe that Beccaria is against the setting of much value on religious oaths, even in a court of justice, urging justly, like the avowed Pantheist—Meslier—that the fears and hopes of religion are too remote (*troppo remoti*) to have much influence on the actions of the *great mass* of mankind. (Sect. xi) Nevertheless, I do not apprehend he would have objected to the above suggestion by way of oath or affirmation for mankind of *all religions*. His views were directed against the oath of *the Christian as such*; and are sufficiently obvious, and as clear as the age allowed him to speak.

Polybius justly praises the Romans for their great respect for their oaths, and also for the punishment they inflicted on those who either broke or tried to break such oaths. (Hampton's *Translation*. Book vi., pp. 406-410.) The common soldiers, too, were obliged to take an oath of obedience to their commanders, (*idem*, p. 352,) and also (in reference to Lord Halifax's suggestion) that "they would not steal, or even if they found anything that they would bring it to the Tribunes." (p. 369.)

The worst of many of the cases in which oaths are now required is, that like that "on the faith of a Christian" the form is not only useless, but *injurious to honesty*. How different that of the Romans! *Our system, too, diminishes even the value set on an oath.*

my mind, (though France in some points and the United States in others comes nearest;) and like him I shall console myself, though the present suggestions never be put in practice, (as they probably never will be,) that I have at least worked disinterestedly for the public good, and that some share of praise ought to follow, whether it does or not.

Although in the present bigotted age, this is out of the question, still as like Gibbon, I wish to part on good terms not only with the Catholic, but also with the Protestant clergy, I shall here state that this work is not intended to censure them particularly, since, speaking generally, I consider all of them in a forced and false position. My pen has only attacked the *measures* and not the men, except perhaps in some rare cases, where these have been able to become more free agents than usual, and have used such power to the detriment of truth and justice, or have given outward approval to a faith in which they cannot believe. There is, however, more excuse for the clergy doing this by writing their *Evidences of Christianity* and of *Prophecy*, &c., than for men of science and letters among laymen doing the same. It is double hypocrisy in these men to write in favour of an obvious fallacy; and as they are *not necessarily called upon to do so*, they, more *especially of all others*, deserve to have their writings keenly criticised.

As to the clergy—seeing their false position—though I feel no ill-will towards the quiet part of them—yet I shall not forget that there are a number of them roaming about, or settled on the continent, and who make it a part of their profession to *commence* their verbal war against Catholics, or unbelievers generally. I speak from expe-

rience, having lately on the continent been drawn into arguments by two such men, at what might almost be called a public table, and during which arguments (*as usual*) the laymen present took the side of the church. On one of these occasions I felt at last obliged to tell my adversary that I thought it a dishonour to our English government that such a man as Gibbon (*known* as an infidel) could not sit in the "House;" for even the admission of the Jews to Parliament only goes half-way. Our worthy clergyman then called Gibbon "an insincere man," forgetting that not one of our Legislators is allowed by opinion, or even law, to be EVEN HALF as sincere as he!

These are the sort of men, too, that try often to insinuate, and if that fail, to push themselves into the sick infidel's or Dissenter's room uncalled for; an instance of which I knew in the case of an artist who died rather suddenly in Italy, and who, in my presence, never expressed more than a modest doubt on the subject. I see also by the *Advertiser*, (October 2nd, 1855,) that this sort of conduct was attempted ineffectually in the case of the Lord Chesterfield, whose "infidelity" has been alluded to in these Letters.

Now, of course, anything like friendship is impossible with such characters as these, and as at the serious period in question a man may not always, from acquiescence of relatives or friends, be in a position to keep these possibly well-meaning persons at a distance, I consider it right here to state that these Letters contain my matured opinions—after an examination of the "religious question" at different intervals, and with somewhat different results for the last twenty years. I say this now, while, thank God, I feel my intellect clear, and as strong as ever. Although phi-

losophers, put little confidence in the change of opinions said to have been brought about in several unbelievers when on their death-bed, yet the clergy ever appeal to these cases—where human reason is almost always injured, often nearly annihilated—as the best evidence that the man changed his opinions! They thus show how weak is their cause.

I, an humble individual, mindful I hope, in the words of Thomas Carlyle, of the “Duties of Man” as well as the “Rights of Man,” put down this, out of no spirit of bravado, but merely as a check on that foolish desire even of “home conversion” which animates the great proportion of our clergy. I am sorry to say that these gentlemen are too often only thinking of *their own* eternal interest, when, at the serious period in question, they *seem* to be thinking alone of that of the sick man. As believers in the scriptures—when, indeed, they are so in reality—they do not forget the reward held out hereafter to those who make converts of the Heathen.

Since, in the reforms proposed in this Letter, I have not alluded in a sufficiently clear manner to the “population question,” and since a work\* treating more especially on this topic, has only fallen into my hands after all the above was written, I propose here to add a few remarks on the Chapter, *Poverty, its only cause and only cure*, apprising the reader that this is ascribed to over-population, and, consequently, that its “only cure” is the use of some of the “checks” enumerated in the work quoted. As I cannot here discuss this subject at length, I shall content myself by recommending it to the attention of the

\* *Physical, Sexual, and Natural Religion*, By a Medical Student. (p. 449. Price 2s. Published by E. Truelove, 240, Strand, Temple-bar. 1855.)



poorer part of the public in general, as a work containing a greater amount of "free thought" and general information on these—with us—*sacred* subjects, than is probably elsewhere to be found.

Notwithstanding, that "war, pestilence, and famine," have decimated the human race, a philosopher cannot but remark, that even these causes seem hardly to have been considered by nature, adequate to keep down population, since she has almost everywhere, at different times of the earth's history, prompted legislators to recommend, and parents to commit, what we now consider so fearful a crime, viz., that of infanticide. In Sparta alone—of all civilised antiquity—was it confined more especially within what might appear the just limits of humanity, viz., where infants were mal-formed. Solon recommended infanticide; Aristotle, abortion; and Plato seems in a great measure to have anticipated Malthus, for he, also, is for *limiting*, as well as improving the physical condition of the population, of course by one of the above means.

Such general consent among sages and savages (for infanticide, has prevailed almost always in barbarous countries,) might well have turned Malthus's powerful mind to this subject; for no doubt the wise Romans would never have tolerated it—particularly as in population consisted their strength for war—had they not considered it somewhat in the light of *necessary evil for greater good*.

Of course, neither Malthus, nor any at the present day, could suggest to a government the *legalisation* of a limited amount of abortion produced artificially, nor of infanticide; neither probably would the ancients have permitted anything of the kind, had what are called "checks" been known to them. These are the substitutes for it, and far



superior, inasmuch of the two, it is better to prevent life, than to take it away even before it can hardly be called life.

Malthus's check—abstinence from marriage till a person can support a family—becomes often a peculiar hardship to the poor man; indeed, it is almost insulting him under the name of Christianity. No doubt, it is strictly in accordance with this faith, which makes, as already stated, fornication “deadly sin;” but if it be so, then surely it is the duty of a government to do something more towards bettering the condition of the poor, that they may have it in their power to marry without actually bringing additional beggars into the world.

Doubtless, other checks noticed as efficacious in the work in question, would not be tolerated as moral by our religion; but the author also mentions that one somewhat recently discovered by Raciborski, viz., “abstinence from sexual intercourse, from the third day before menstruation, till the eighth day after it,” (p. 348); and this might even be used by married people, who firmly believed in Christianity. Professor Muller, some few years back, (see *Physiology*) mentioned this discovery; and it is right to say, that even now it seems only *highly probable* as such, but certainly worth attending to by the religious with large families, who are in poor circumstances, as giving a good chance.

As this last check is the only one, the very strict believer in Christianity would use, and as this party constitutes *at the very least* more than three fourths of our population, we see clearly that if over-population be the “only cause” of poverty, as our author asserts, there is very little chance in this “religious country” at least, of his

remedy being followed. Indeed, even if all the checks he suggests were pretty generally followed, I apprehend, that still the destruction of monopolies. or the regulation of prices, as already advocated in this Letter, would be requisite to equalise property to a reasonable extent. I however, admit, that a general use of his "checks," would tend to diminish poverty to a very considerable extent.

As then, while Christianity is the established religion, it is in vain to expect any diminution of poverty by a general use of this author's checks; we have here, again, another injurious effect of this creed to add to those already mentioned in this work.

I believe I may also enumerate among these, its tendency, by its opposition to Burke's wise maxim, (see p. 4), to increase the number of the very *worst cases* of prostitution, viz., those in which a woman is left totally without means of support. The author of the work now noticed, says justly, "*only by allowing greater sexual freedom, is it possible to eradicate prostitution.*" (p. 369.) I have long been of this opinion, and there was an otherwise good article on the subject in the *Westminster Review* some years ago, but it did not make the above suggestion. The Turkish Empire, however, shows its truth, where fornication on the part of the man and adultery on that of the woman or man, is very severely punished. If we punished adultery by imprisonment and *hard labour*, and opinion passed a less severe sentence on illegitimate connexions, (which nevertheless exist *clandestinely* to an enormous extent in this country), I believe our social liberty would be vastly improved, and our female population less often driven to prostitution. Gibbon and Crevier

both speak of connexions without actual marriage recognised by law among the Romans; and the former writer says justly of this *concubinage* (as it was called in legal terms), that “in it the two Antonines, the best of princes and of men, enjoyed the comforts of domestic love.” (*Decline and Fall*, ch. xliv.) I may add that Antoninus Pius was the more justified in such a step as the Empress Faustina seems to have been unfaithful to him. This *concubine* of the Romans was commonly of the lower classes of life, but she very properly had *legal* rights, and her children also, who were “capable of succeeding to a sixth part of the inheritance of their reputed father.” (*Idem.*) I observe that the author of the work very properly published by Mr. Truelove for promoting discussion on these *sacred* matters, says justly, without indeed alluding to the concubinage above noticed of the Romans, or “*secondary marriage*,” as Gibbon also calls it, and which seems similar to what our author suggests for Britain,—“that all parents should be *legally* forced to support their children.” (*Op. Cit.*, p. 368.) The only objection I can perceive to the utility of the above suggestions is, that such “secondary marriages” might in some cases tend to prevent marriages justly so called; but I apprehend only in a very limited degree, and perhaps it would be unfair to put this one bad effect in opposition to the numerous good ones the author of the work in question attempts to show would follow were opinion less severe on all cases of illicit sexual intercourse.

I do not think when the “population question” is thus *widely considered*, not only as to the mere permission of abortion or infanticide, but *also as regards checks*, that Christianity has done any real good on this subject. At the present day,

certainly, infanticide should be put down by severe law, *since checks supply its place*; but since Christianity would not consider this as a reason, or *influence legislation on any such principle*, I see no reason to praise Christianity on this point, even though I freely give it and Judaism the credit, if any there really be, of having changed the world's *ideas* on this subject. "Christianity," says Gibbon, (*chap. xlv.*) had been insufficient (till the time of Valentinian) to eradicate this inhuman practice, until its gentle influence was fortified by the terrors of capital punishment." Nevertheless, as it fortified the original Jewish *idea*, it must, I conceive, lay claim to any merit attached to such change of ideas; though such came near half a century after the time of Constantine. But, as Gibbon hints, it was *actual law* that put down the practice; and if there be anything really good in Christianity, this can always be resorted to by a government to punish such crime or sin. As law can always thus seize the *kernel*, we should do well to throw the shell with its ambiguity, and other bad qualities away, *i. e.*, the so-called revealed religion itself.

After having suggested what may probably be called Utopian and impracticable, and too vast changes in our social system, and that of the United States, I shall close this letter by referring to a minor reform that is, at least, not impracticable. I allude to the multiplication of places of accomodation for the relief of the urinary organs, &c., &c., as Mr. Lewis Gompertz, (the liberal-minded originator, along with Mr. Martin, Sir J. Mackintosh and others of our laws against cruelty to animals) justly observed in a letter which some time back he printed and sent to the journals on this subject, stating that by the absence of the places

alluded to, *disease is often slowly produced in the organs in question*. In the city during late years there has been great improvement, but such has not extended to the West End. This neglect is the less justifiable in this country, because we have a law against "exposure of person," and because we often find convictions under this law printed up at our park gates. Now it seems very difficult occasionally to decide whether such "exposure" may not have been a case almost of necessity, mistaken for one of express intention; and if so, it shows that prudery, or economy, here sometimes defeats its object, and becomes a source of injustice to the public.



## NOTES.

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Note A., page 13.—I find Hume seems to doubt the utility of Theism as a State Religion. He says, (*Natural History of Religion*, p. 468) "If we should suppose, what never happens, that a popular religion were found, in which it was declared that nothing but morality could gain the divine favour; if an order of priests were instituted to inculcate this opinion in sermons with all the arts of persuasion; yet so inveterate are prejudices, that for want of some other superstition, *they would make the very attendance on these sermons the essentials of religion*, rather than place them in virtue and good morals."

Again, (p. 469,) "The moral obligation (in the opinion of the masses) removes all pretension to religious merit." Again, in his *Idea of a Perfect Commonwealth*, (p. 523,) we find him having so little regard to the religion of this, that he actually says, "The Presbyterian government is established." To be sure, he puts this ecclesiastical court *under the civil magistrate*, by giving him "power to try, depose, or suspend, any Presbyter." He adds, (p. 528,) "Without dependance of the clergy on the civil magistrates, it is in vain to think that any free government will have security." But, though good, this is not enough to secure "free government," since, as the magistrates themselves, in all Christian countries, must adopt some form of Christianity, they themselves are under its influence, almost as much as the clergy are, as the example of England, and even America, now shows; and as Jefferson said, Presbyterians have proved themselves the most intolerant of the Protestant sects. I think, therefore, we must admit that on the mere question of religion, Sir T. More, in his *Utopia*, is wiser than Hume; although Hume begins the present Essay by saying, in reference to More, that "all plans of government which suppose great reformation in the manners of mankind, are plainly imaginary." (p. 516.) Hence, perhaps, it was that he thought a revealed and in-

tolerant religion was as good as a tolerant one laying no claims to revelation, *supposing the former were dependant on the civil power.*

But, if "manners cannot be reformed" by good laws, what is the use of proposing these? But that Hume errs on this point, great as his talents are, I think is proved by some nations surpassing others in civilisation *now*, just as Greece and Rome did formerly. To be sure, Hume says, "*great reformation,*" and perhaps the history of the world has proved him right in this respect. Still, I must consider his "*Commonwealth*" very defective as regards religion. In alluding to Plato, too, on this subject, it is singular that he only mentions the *Republic*, (which he classes with the *Utopia*) as "*imaginary;*" while he does not mention the *Laws*, the *very last work* of Plato, and as St. John justly says, "*a more really practical work.*" (Introduction to More's *Utopia*.)

It might have been possible, after recommending Presbyterianism, to have classed Hume with Frederick the Great and others, who thought Christianity at least a *useful* creed, though they did not believe in it. But in the following passage he justly enumerates its defects, and though Catholicism only is alluded to, still the History even of Elizabeth's reign shows, as Sydney Smith remarks, (*Edinburgh Review*), that Protestantism *at times* has been quite as intolerant. "Virtue, knowledge, love of liberty, are the qualities which call down the fatal vengeance of inquisitors." (p. 445.) And such being the case, *he in this page*, most wisely and justly, places the atrocities committed by the followers of the Carthaginian and Mexican religions in a more excusable light, than those committed by Catholics. In his *Commonwealth* Hume forgets that *intolerance* is *directly preached* by Christianity, and that Catholics and Presbyterians are only more intolerant than other sects, because they follow Christianity *more to the letter*. All revealed religions are always more intolerant than natural religion, as a matter of course: thus, as Gibbon shows, the, in some respects, wise religion of Zoroaster was more intolerant than Deism, because it *professed to be revealed*. But as there was not any TEXT in that religion, which *expressly consigned heretics to damnation*, so, of course, even this religion would not be so intolerant as Christianity, Mahomedanism, and Judaism. In like manner, the Deism, said to have been revealed to Numa, was more tolerant than these.

In consequence of these reflections, I find myself again opposed to Hume, "The intolerance of almost all religions which have maintained the unity of God, is as remarkable as the contrary opinion of Polytheists." (p. 444.) We have just seen there is a *gradation* in the tolerance even of Revealed Religions which proclaim Monotheism: *but when this doctrine is held merely as a consequence of induction from the phenomena of Nature, it is certainly far more tolerant even than Polytheism.*

In his remarks on toleration, in the *Essay On a Particular Providence*, (vol. ii., p. 149,) Hume says, "There are scarcely any instances to be met with, in Ancient History, of this bigotted jealousy, with which the present age is so much infested. Epicurus lived at Athens to an advanced age in peace; Epicureans were even permitted to officiate at the altar in the most sacred rites of the established religion: and the public encouragement of pensions and salaries was afforded equally by the wisest of the Roman Emperors to the Professors of various sects of philosophy, says Lucian."\* Hume had just before stated, that "The death of Socrates proceeded partly from *other motives*," (probably his indulging in irony against powerful individuals?) than a want of toleration in Polytheism. But I think it is clear from Diogenes Laertius's *Lives*, that there is a distinction to be made in this respect, and that the *Greeks were far more intolerant than the Romans*; for we find that Stilpo, Protagoras, and Aristotle were banished, and Theophrastus nearly so; and that Anaxagoras killed himself to avoid further persecution for religion's sake.

Hume would perhaps have us believe by his Note, (C. C., vol. i., p. 535,) that the Romans were as bad in this respect, since he mentions the Emperor Claudius abolishing the superstition of the Druids by penal law. But Gibbon takes a juster view of this supposed infringement on their usual spirit of toleration, by stating that the religion of the Druids was obviously highly immoral, since it enforced on certain occasions, human sacrifices; and yet, though even this was the case, "the priests themselves, their gods, and altars, subsisted in peaceful obscurity till the final destruction of Paganism." (*Decline and Fall*. Chap. ii., sect. i.)† So that in fact, *even in this case*, it was Chris-

\* Hume also, in his *History of England*, (vol. i.,) calls the Romans "tolerating conquerors."

† Again—Diocletian (A. D. 284) frequently conferred

tianity that may be said to have put down the *religion*: Paganism, far more tolerant, left this free, after it had wisely prohibited the *bad moral part* of it, viz., human sacrifices. Gibbon, too, has so fully shown that Paganism *was obliged, for its own existence*, to persecute Christianity, that Hume's allusion to this case is not in point. Paganism was still surely too lenient, for we see that in the end it was *actually exterminated* by Christianity.

Now, in order to point out an oversight in Hume, I must beg the reader to refer to my last quotations from his *Essays*, and to compare with the following from the same, placed at the head of his Note C., p. 535, vol. i. "It is a vulgar error to imagine that the Ancients were as great friends to toleration as the English or Dutch are at present." But even the Athenians tolerated Epicurus, as he informed us, and I think by the aid of Gibbon I have shown these people were far less tolerant than the Romans. It follows, then, clearly that the toleration at least of the Romans was greater than that of the English or Dutch; and I doubt not, indeed, than even that of the Greeks was, considered as *mere religion*. And, in fact, if we refer again to the *Natural History of Religion*, p. 444, we shall find the following passage:—"If among Christians the English and Dutch have embraced the principles of toleration, this has proceeded from the *steady resolution of the civil magistrate*, in opposition to the continued efforts of priests and bigots." This is in fact saying that Christianity itself is far more intolerant than Polytheism, which, in truth, is one of the points for which he wrote his Essay in question, directly to prove.

We now see the reason why Hume, in his Commonwealth, makes Presbyterianism under the power of the "civil magistrate;" because he had seen that such subjection could diminish its persecuting spirit, as in England and Holland. But the magistrate *can only do this in part, and that as far as actual law goes*. But Hume forgot the *persecution* by opinion—the social persecution which must ever remain while so intolerant a religion is predominant, *even as a religion*. Besides, this power of the magistrate only

"most important offices" on people of ability, who even "*avowed Atheism*." (Chap. xvi., *Diocletian*.) This *fact* alone will induce any impartial person to believe that there were urgent *secular* causes for his persecution of the Christians, still much *exaggerated*. (See Gibbon.)



remains *as long as the laws remain*: but as Christianity influences the very making of the laws, such laws stand a chance of being *repealed* any day by the influence of some bigots, or *new ones* made more in accordance with the *strict spirit* of Christianity. Hume admits that *priestly* influence has been set aside *very judiciously* by the civil power; why, then, if there must be a *religion for the people*, has he not preferred the old Polytheism for his Commonwealth? he being a friend of toleration, and himself admitting that such was the most tolerant form of religion. I say this on the supposition that he thought pure Theism would not do *for the people*. But I cannot think he is right on this point: for a religion, under the control of the magistrate, may, *in fact*, be said to be no religion, except that, to show its intolerance and *power*, it will still always continue to persecute by opinion. Now, pure Theism would not do this.

I do not apprehend that Cicero was so much in favour of religious toleration, as a consistent Republican should be, for in his *Republic* or *Laws* he merely recommends every citizen to profess the religion of his country. It seems, indeed, probable from Adams's statement, that under the Emperors, (as a sort of compensation for the loss of much political liberty,) the spirit of religious toleration increased. "If any one," says Adams, "introduced foreign rites *of himself*, they were publicly condemned by the Senate. *But under the Emperors*, all superstition, (even of Isis, Serapis, and Anubis, from Egypt,) flocked to Rome."\*

We must, however, bear in mind on this subject, that as "Nero repealed many of the decrees of Claudius," (*Suetonius's Nero*, sect. 33); so one Emperor acted towards the laws of another. Thus, although Augustus disliked the Jewish and Egyptian rites, still it was only under Tiberius we find something at all events *like* persecution; both

\* *Roman Antiquities*, (p. 56,) quoted from Livy. (Liv. xxix., 11 and 12,—iv., 30,—xxv., 50.) In proof of this greater tendency to toleration under the Emperors, I may quote Gibbon, (chap. xi., Note,) who says, that "in the year of Rome 701, the Temple of Isis was demolished by order of the Senate: but after the death of Cæsar it was restored *at the public expense*." (*Dion Cassius*, l. xl., p. 252, et. l. xlvii., p. 501.) These last words speak volumes in favour of Pagan toleration; and this we observe was *just as the Empire was beginning*.



Suetonius (*Tiberius*, 36,) and Tacitus, (*Annals*. s. 11 85,) agreeing that he made the Jews undergo a sort of banishment. But it seems most probable, even at this time, that their hatred of Paganism (strongly disposing them to actual revolt) was the cause of this severity, for we know that Tiberius was indifferent to all religions; and Suetonius further on, (*Life of Claudius*, sect 25,) expressly says, "this Emperor banished the Jews out of Rome, *who were perpetually making disturbances*." But we observe here, they were banished even *a very little way*, viz., "out of Rome" only. Vespasian obliged the Jews, after the destruction of Jerusalem, to pay a slight tribute, and was otherwise severe. But all this was not on account of Judaism, *as a religion*, but because we see that, even from the time of Claudius, such religion had "*caused disturbances*." Under Domitian, (*Suetonius*, sect 12,) it appears some of them had their estates confiscated, "because they did not pay the tribute laid upon that nation."\* But BEFORE the Jews forced Vespasian into that war, by which Jerusalem fell, there seems no evidence that they had any tribute laid upon themselves as Jews. Rome seems to have left religion, even in this case, free; and the Jews were justly punished, because they wanted their religion to be *above* Paganism.

"The only direct tribute imposed by the Romans," says Lord Brougham, (*Nature of Democracy. Roman Polity*, chap. v., p. 244), "upon a conquered people, was a tax of one-twentieth on the sale of all slaves.† \* \* They were allowed to retain their own laws, form of government, and magistrates. No Governor was sent from Rome, and the Senate and Consuls exercised no authority except in matters of peace, and war, and alliances, except, that the

\* "*Imposita genti tributa, non pependissent.*" See my *Historical Sketches of some of the Roman Emperors*, or Crevier's learned French work on the same subject.

† We here observe that Lord Brougham says nothing about the conquered nations being obliged to pay a tribute towards the support of a religion they often (as regarded its details) might not believe in, viz., the state religion of Rome. Rousseau also says (*Contrat Social*, liv. iv.) "a crown to Jupiter of the Capitol was often the only tribute they imposed." This was in fact only obliging men to acknowledge subjection to *one Supreme God* (D. O. M.) *or powe*", which all must, or ought, to acknowledge. I find

troops for the wars of the Republic were paid, as well as raised, by the conquered districts. \* \* \* The conquered people were not allowed to intermarry with Romans, nor to dwell in the city, nor to hold any offices, nor to have any voice in elections, *nor to enjoy any intercourse of sacred rites.*"

It is from this last passage, which I have marked in italics, that we may, I think, infer that Polytheism and Christianity seemed to have directly *opposite tendencies* as to the desire to extend themselves, and, consequently, as to toleration. Paganism seemed to say, worship your own Gods, we cannot permit you to worship ours, which are either too good for you, or superior to your comprehension. The Pagans wisely would have scouted our modern ideas of "missionaries," or our constant attempts even at *home conversion*. Under such circumstances, it was not very likely they would have forced the Jews to pay for the support of the Pagan religion, viz., *as religion* \*

It was not till after the insurrection, A. U. C., 658, that the whole of Italy, south of the Arno and Rubicon, was comprehended in the Roman State, and the above restrictions were removed. Julius Cæsar, A. U. C., 705, added Gaul, and Caracalla all the provinces of the Roman Empire to the citizenship.

Recurring again more especially to religious toleration, I may perhaps urge the less amount of this under the Athenian Republic (already alluded to), than under the Roman government generally, whether Republican or Imperial, in confirmation of my opinion that religious tolera-

nothing in the Empire under Paganism like forcing men to pay to an "established church," in the doctrines of which they cannot believe. This acme of tyranny (see Ireland especially) vitiates all the glory of our too highly extolled civil liberty.

\* There can be no doubt that it was only because the Romans saw that the nature of the Jewish religion was most *intolerant to all other religions*, and hence, consequently, often exciting the Jews to *revolt*, that at last they were obliged to act with great *seeming* intolerance to them. Under Trajan again they tried to revolt, and under Adrian succeeded in keeping up a formidable war against the Empire *two years*. (See Crevier's *Adrian*.) These remarks apply also to Christians, who seem at this time to have often been called Jews.

tion was greater at Rome under the Empire than under the Republic. The Athenians no doubt found that their amount of political liberty was so great, that they dared not, for the safety of the Republic, allow too great religious liberty. Probably the Romans, under their Republic, thought so too ; and the opinion seems wise that a Republic should not allow such perfect religious toleration as a more despotic government can well afford to do.

It is true that the grand Atheistic or Pantheistic poem of Lucretius was written under the Republic before the time of Cicero, and this may seem to go against the opinion of the greater amount of religious liberty under the Empire. But even supposing the poem was circulated as widely as any other works, and by a similar number of copies under the Republic, still this would only show that from first to last, the *expression of thought on religious matters was free at Rome* (Cæsar's assertions in the open Senate seem to show the same) ; but under the Empire, religious rites or *practices*, (as already stated in regard to Isis) were permitted, which the Republic would not tolerate. Freedom of *thought* shows great toleration in religious matters no doubt, but freedom of *practice* still greater.

Since writing the [above, I have re-read Montesquieu's *Dissertation sur la Politique des Romains dans la Religion*, and find in it, on the authority of Cicero, (*De Leg.*, l. 2, c. 9) that "Augurs could pronounce nothing on public affairs without the permission of the magistrates ; and that it was so ordered in the books of the Pontiffs." As we have already seen that Hume was in favour of ecclesiastical power being under civil, he probably adopted this wise view from the Romans, but he forgot the British people had a far more intolerant religion to deal with, and this, I think, should have induced him to have wished to have seen the old Pagan religion back again along with the wise regulation just mentioned.

On much the same principle, I think, Roman Catholics should do the same, for, strange to say, they also have only borrowed half—unfortunately the worst half—and it would have been well for toleration had they borrowed the whole. We know that their priests object to the Bible being read generally, and Montesquieu tells us that the Senate did the same with regard to the sibillyne books, and would not allow them to be read, except under the pressure of some great public calamity. Again, like the Catholics, "all *interpretations* of these sacred books were forbid," and, adds Montesquieu,

“by so wise a precaution, arms were taken out of the hands of fanaticism and sedition.” No doubt any examination of the *details* of Polytheism would have injured the stability of the government; and as these *details* were in fact the *religion of the people*—who were too ignorant at that time to appreciate the *generalities*—so true—on which Polytheism is founded, the Senate were wise in making the above regulations.

I apprehend the Catholics are so too in the present day in these respects; for they also allow no “interpretations” of scripture. But the vast superiority of Polytheism over Catholicism is clear from two considerations—1st, as I just observed, its *generalities* are TRUE; for, as Montesquieu says, the Pagans thought it mattered little whether we adored the *Divinity itself*, or the *manifestations* of the Divinity; for example, Venus, as the passive generative power of nature, and the sun as the active power,” &c., &c. Thus Cicero says (*De Nat. Deorum*, b. 2, chap. xxviii.) the Supreme Power on land is worshipped under the name of Ceres; on sea, under that of Neptune. 2ndly, There was no intolerance in Polytheism.

Now *even the generalities* of scripture will not bear any philosophical examination of the above kind; and of course, both the Jewish and Christian religions have filled the world with dissention and bloodshed by their great intolerance.

I say, then, I think the Catholics right in allowing little examination *and no dissent*, because, as reasonable men, they must be convinced that the *generalities*, as well as the details of their religion, have no solid foundation; and, consequently, that philosophical examination can only lead to discord, and a fatal development of that intolerent spirit which is the very essence of all *real* Christianity. The immense number of sects, and the intolerant state of opinion in the “States,” although not having led to much bloodshed, will, I think, also favour the wisdom of the Catholics on these points; and I much query whether the sort of half-toleration (or even less) of the reformation, admitting its good in some respects, was worth the immense amount of bloodshed it has cost the world.

Montesquieu does not say that the Romans imposed any tax on conquered nations for the support of *their* (so to call it) “established Church.” On the contrary, he asserts that *they* found, or always tried to find, *their own Gods*, but assuming a different name, in all the conquered districts; and



thus were enabled to give them the strongest possible claim to that ACTUAL EQUALITY which, provided they were not themselves intolerant, they in fact acquired at Rome. Now this system was not only wise and just, but it was TRUE; for *God is everywhere*. "Thus," says Montesquieu, with real eloquence, "conquered nations regarded Rome rather as the SANCTUARY OF RELIGION, than the mistress of the world."

To sum up, recurring again to Hume. I think he should have seen in Paganism itself, that Theism (at all events when graced with a little poetry, so to call it,) was a possible religion for the people. Lord Brougham (Paley's *Natural Theology Illustrated*, Notes viii. and ix., pp. 273 to 296) shows well that Plato and Cicero held very rational opinions on a future state, and that these, Strabo, and I might add Polybius, regarded Theism as the foundation of Paganism, (Jupiter was always the *chief* God, see Taylor's *Diegesis*, pp. 14-15); and that the Mythological fables were merely *added* as being more suited to the comprehension of the vulgar—much in the same way as Catholics of the present day have by similar embellishments and fiction made their faith, replete with male and female saints, like the "lesser Deities" of Paganism—more adapted to the devotional feelings of the mass of the community. Certainly, the poet will, also, rather praise such additions, ("pious frauds" if you like so to call them) for by them Paganism and Catholicism have both become far more *poetical religions* than Protestantism. In consequence, (speaking generally) they may be said almost to have given birth to poetry, painting, and sculpture. If the Pope would but separate intolerance, &c., from Catholicism, I should regard that as a system of pure Theism, and the best of any at present existing.

Note B., page 18.—While *laws exist in the statute book*, as they do still with us in England in favour of Christianity, our still very useful martyrs in the cause of free-thought, can scarcely say they have *forced* the government to its present very laudable spirit of toleration in matters of religion. The government has only given way from  *motives of policy*, and on emergency could still if it thought fit, resort to its former disgraceful course of persecution, which, indeed, was only following Christianity in its *real spirit*. To-day, the government is wisely, only *nominally* Christian in ignoring (for it cannot be said absolutely to sanction) the attacks of free-thinkers.

It seems to me a mistake to suppose that Richard Carlile



(or Robert Taylor,) contributed much to the freedom of the British Press as regarded *Theology*, since Hume and Gibbon had previously found publishers. But Carlile, at *the same time*, that he published against Christianity, advocated the freest political theories and practice, (short of actual communism,) and this was probably very greatly concerned in the violent government persecutions in this case, though Messrs. Taylor's and Holyoake's imprisonments show that *lecturing* against Christianity offended government much at that time. Thomas Paine commenced writing in favour of Republics, and only years afterwards attacked Christianity, which attack lost him the friendship of Dr. Rush, (see Vale's *Life of Paine*,) and as Rush was a most intimate friend of Jeffersons, caused, perhaps, even this latter great man to regard Paine with less cordiality on his return to America, than he otherwise would have done. (See *Memoirs of Jefferson*, by Randolph, (in four vols.))

It was not till the *Throne seemed attacked* as well as the Altar, that our government moved. Be it also remembered, that America and France had actually succeeded in establishing Republics at the time Paine wrote, and when Carlile began to reprint his works. Now, as there is no fear of any party succeeding in establishing a Republic here, further than on paper, government ignores political writings that go even farther than Carlile thought desirable. *He* did not advocate communism; but many works now left free do; nor are the writers prosecuted. But, I apprehend, the government has not lost the power to prosecute, should a change of circumstances seem to render such a step desirable. Some old law exists in the statute book, like the one in reference to Christianity, and like that could be *evoked* on emergency. These spectres, too, might not only "be called;" but would actually "come," when called for. That the British government merely ignores, and can not in reality be said, even now actually to *tolerate* writings against Christianity, the following case among others, distinctly shows. It is taken from Cox's Work, p. p. 477-8.

After stating that from *policy*, ("as prohibition tends rather to increase than diminish circulation,") the press is left free, except in some peculiarly offensive cases, Cox continues, "In England the celebrated maxim, that Christianity is part and parcel of the law," continues to operate as a bar to the free propagation of opinion, in a manner which it is impossible for a moment to defend. On

this principle, Lord Hardwicke in 1743, decided that a sum of money left to found an institution for reading the Jewish law, could not legally be so applied; and so late as June, 1855! a similar decision was given by the Vice-Chancellor, and the following bequest was declared to be null, as being "repugnant to revealed religion."

W. J. Hartley, by will, dated 1843, "gave to Major General Briggs £300 as a remuneration, for the best original essay on Natural Theology, treating it as a science, &c.; also demonstrating the adequacy of this, when so treated and taught as a science, to constitute a true, perfect, and philosophical system of universal religion, founded on immutable facts, and the works of creation, and beautifully adapted to man's reason, and tending as other sciences do, but in a higher degree, to improve and elevate his nature, and render him a wise, happy, and exalted being."\*

The Vice-Chancellor said, that in his opinion, the above words which the testator had chosen to adopt, could not mean anything that was at all consistent with Christianity.

In this respect, no doubt, he was right; but his decision shows, that even now, as Cox justly says, the *supposed* non-belief in Christianity operates on a person's interest in a "manner which it is impossible to defend." For here we see, that although a person uses *no disrespect whatever* to the prevailing creed, yet, because his views are considered to be even *secretly* hostile to it, his bequest is made null. This will be warning enough to those who believe only in the one true religion, (*viz.*, Theism,) to give anything they wish for its support, during their life-time, since treat Christianity as *respectfully as you may*, you cannot annihilate its inherent persecuting spirit. Had Theism, on the contrary, been the religion of the State as I suggest, it would have tolerated a bequest of this sort from any sectarian to his sect, whether it were Jew, Christian, or Infidel. Cox goes on to say, that the same unjust decision did not occur in Scotland in 1832 in Taylor's case. But here the bequest was "to the general *Unitarian Baptist Assembly*;" and as Unitarians are admitted to our Parliament, as *calling themselves* Christians, the cases are totally different; and besides, this decision was made by Lord Jeffery, who, as a writer for the *Edinburgh Review*, was as

\* Cox justly praises this as appearing to have been the religion of "Socrates, Cicero, Collins, Adam Smith, Franklin, and Jefferson." (p. 480.)

liberal as opinion allowed him to be. Therefore, I apprehend, Cox to be in error, when he considers Scotland, *in this respect*, more free than England. (*Op. Cit.*, p. 479.)

It follows, from all the above, that our free-thinkers should not consider their victory complete, till they have got the noxious laws in question *out of the statute book*. We see *obsolete* laws (as we suppose,) almost every week being attempted to be put in practice again, as for instance, in reference to the labourer, (p. 32, note): and though I am glad to see, that Sir George Grey has reversed the decision of those magistrates, it seems still, perhaps, doubtful, whether their decision was not strictly legal; and whether or not, it is to be remembered, that this old man has been subjected to a vast deal of annoyance, on account of our bad mode of legislation. This is anything but liberty.

The Athenian custom, noticed, p. 82, is clearly the proper one; and Lord Brougham is said to be now occupied in endeavouring to get all the useless or injurious laws on our statute book repealed. Doubtless, he deserves great praise for such labour; but time will show whether our *Christian*, by necessity, legislature, will tolerate this blow—which alone can be called the death blow—against bigotry, or if “things were called by their right names”—actual IRRELIGION.

Note C., Page 23.—As the Bible expressly commands death to witches, I have urged this in my third argument (p. 23) as another objection against even the *utility* of the scriptures. I propose here to enter into a few details of the evils this scripture doctrine has caused.

1.—“The charge of witchcraft too commonly arose out of the medical success of the offender.” (Sandby’s *Mesmerism*, p. 40.) “The persecutions for witchcraft did not commence till towards the close of the 15th century, *i. e.*, when what are called the dark or middle ages were rapidly passing away!”

2.—“This persecution extended all over Europe, and by it many thousands suffered death.”

3.—“During the Puritanic supremacy of the famous long parliament, 3,000 victims perished.” (p. 41.) “The General Assembly passed an act for all ministers to take note of witches and charms.”

In pp. 42 and 43, after many instances of the persecuting spirit of the Presbyterian clergy on this point, we find that “three poor women were executed in 1623 at Perth for doctoring.” (p. 44.)

"These charges were generally connected with cures wrought, or attempted, for some severe disease. The ignorant prosecutors could not explain what they saw: it was a paradox how an old woman could by 'simples' cure diseases which had resisted the wisdom of the professor." Hence the charge of sorcery.

I am indebted to Mr. Sandby's work for the above *facts*;\* but I shall no doubt draw a somewhat different conclusion from them from what the rev. gentleman has done.

1st.—They show the danger there is to the public in admitting that anything like supernatural science is true, without complete and impartial examination. Here we find people punished for *imaginary* crimes. Individuals who *themselves* professed to have the power of witchcraft, deserved, no doubt, a lenient punishment (fine) for *fraud*; just as astrologers, and *many* mesmerists and somnambules do at the present day. But those who did not *themselves* profess to know such art, deserved no punishment.

2ndly.—They show that Protestantism can sometimes be as intolerant as Catholicism; and that the advantages of a free form of government may be very materially diminished by co-existence of superstition, or a pernicious sentiment which is the offspring of revealed religion. (See No. 3 above quotation.)

3rdly.—They confirm what I have said in this work in reference to preaching Christianity to "the heathen," and nations immersed in ignorance—nay perhaps even further—to highly educated nations; since the reader will observe the curious fact, viz., it was at "the close of the 15th century," *just about the time of the spread of knowledge by printing and the so-called reformation, that believers in Christianity began to persecute for witchcraft!*

The present religious condition of the *highly educated* United States, with its Shakers, Swedenbourgians, and Spirit Rappers, &c., &c., (I speak with no disrespect) added to the fact just noted, confirms me more and more in the belief that every State should have an established religion; but *also*, that that religion should be natural THEISM. The command—"Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live," still exists in the scriptures, nor can any man tell when opinion

\* The student should also refer to a No. in the *Edinburgh* some years ago for details of still further horrors, and to mark the *vast numbers* executed.



or clerical influence may again be powerful enough—at all events in new and barbarous nations—to cause it to be obeyed.

Note D., page 57.—As I have often called Protestantism only a sort of half reformation, I shall here add some details on the subject by way of establishing my points.

Gibbon very justly calls the reformers of the 15th and 16th centuries “a set of fanatics.”\* That great historian contented himself as a reformer in matters of religion, with showing that Christianity was not altogether of divine origin; and as this was a vast step indeed in advance of Luther and Calvin, he *deserves* immortal honour, yet is not likely to get his statue in the “Abbey.” However, he is still too guarded in his remarks on the *tendency* of Christianity. In regard to “unconditional submission,” his views are clear enough as he prefers the views of Paganism to Christianity on this point—the sway of the Antonines to that of Constantine or Theodosius. But in different parts we find him speaking of the “mild tendency of the gospel,” as if in approval of its *true* spirit,† in contradistinction to the precept and practices of its degenerate professors. But surely, when noticing the persecutions of Charles the Fifth, he might justly have said, here we have an instance of its bad tendency on a man of an enlarged and otherwise liberal mind.

No doubt, Charles V., *began* very mildly with Luther

\* No doubt they were, and some of the changes they made were as foolish as they were unjust; witness the closed pew system, shutting up churches six days in the week, and building such small ones. It is to be remarked, too, that every form of Catholicism is of a more cheerful character than of Calvinistic Protestantism, even to the sound of the church bell. I have no doubt that all except fanatics would be very glad to find this, reminding one of anything rather than heaven, tolling only ten minutes instead of twenty minutes, or half an hour twice each Sunday—especially if they lived in the *immediate vicinity* of the Protestant church.

† See end of chap. xvi. I think, too, that Gibbon was deterred by the unjust clamour raised against this chapter, from doing *full* justice afterwards to the life of the Emperor Julian (ch. xxiii.) Indeed, he almost says so himself by implication. (See *Life* by himself.)



when he summoned him to Worms;\* but afterwards we find him approving of the punishment of death for heresy, and asserting that "it was strange the German nation should undertake to do what all other nations in the universe, even with the Pope, would not be authorised to do," and concluding by censuring "the new Mahomet," as he called Luther.† He did not resort to harsh measures, certainly, before he found mild ones ineffectual to suppress the "movement;" but let us reflect that these harsh measures were the stake, and that during his reign, (from 1545 to 1556) no less 1,320 were burnt alive, and 6,600 sentenced to the galleys or imprisonment for *mere heresy*.‡

Although nothing can justify such barbarity, still it must be confessed that Charles might have viewed one of Luther's innovations, viz.—justification *by faith*, not only as unscriptural, but what is of vast more importance, as *highly immoral*; and this too in a man who professed to start a purer view of Christianity. "Penance, says he, and such sort of sacrifice is not wanted:" we are led by implication to infer the "sole sacrifice," Luther considered wanted, was that of *Reason!!* This was to be sacrificed to what he called Faith! (D'Aubigné, vol. 1, p. 73). Let us admit on this subject, that if the Roman Catholics had pushed the

\* D'Aubigné's *History of the Reformation*, (by Scott,) vol. i., pp. 585-636.

† *Idem.*, vol. ii., p. 305.

‡ Vol. ii., p. 626. The numbers burnt by order of Torquemada between 1481 and 1498 were 10,220. It is not till from 1759 till 1788, in the reign of Charles III., that we find a *very* great diminution, the numbers burnt being only four; and from 1788 to 1808 none.

After giving the above and the other details, Scott remarks, "*It is lamentable to think that infidel philosophy, not evangelical Christianity, has been the grand agent in effecting the diminution of victims.*" So much for the blessings, then, of mere Protestantism to the world! This, for a time, tended to increase the number of victims, giving indeed some, but not very great, advantage to mankind for such vast sacrifice. It was not till Montesquieu, Diderot, Volney, Voltaire, Rousseau, Hume, Gibbon, and others began to *doubt* or *deny* the truth of *Christianity itself*, viz., from before 1770 to 1788, that this bloody persecution was changed to the *milder* form in which we see it exist at the present, viz., censure by opinion.

belief in the power of the Pope and their church to pardon sins (after penance) too far, the Lutherans, on the other side, insisted to an absurd and *prejudicial* extent, on the text:—"If we confess our sins to God, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins." (p. 40). With the great mass, this sort of confession is no confession at all; and certainly confession to a conscientious Roman Catholic priest (and there are many such) would have been a greater check on crime, had not that church unfortunately got into the practice of selling *indulgences*. Here, I confess, Luther justly attacked them; but when we find Leo X. making such good use *for the public* of the vast sums acquired by the sale of these, as building St. Peter's at Rome, and buying M.S.S. of Livy, (p. 232), Tacitus, (*Valery's Travels*), and other classical authors, we must regard even this abuse with more lenity than otherwise. The fault is inherent in the creed itself, which tells us that by repentance the *reddest* sins will be forgiven. Such belief will ever be as much liable to abuse with Luther's views equally as with those of the Roman Catholics, as the case (a few years ago) of the wholesale Norwich murderer Rush—to all appearance a very sincere Protestant—evinced. "No man can prove from scripture, that God's justice requires any satisfaction (except repentance) from the sinner," said Luther, (p. 238), and perhaps he may be right; but I apprehend it would have been better for the community, had Rush and similar characters, held the belief, that confession and repentance openly to a priest, and even some payment or penance, was necessary as a "satisfaction." Again, (p. 599), Luther preaches:—"We are saved by the works of Christ, not our own works." The Pope says something very different, and he probably says something better, though whether more *strictly* scriptural, I apprehend neither he or any one else can truly decide, seeing how ambiguous every point looks by scripture light. As our *own* works cannot save us; so thought Rush they cannot damn us, *provided we repent*, or appear to do so, for (see his trial) he seemed to expect salvation.

"People must first be made partakers of life by faith, if they would do works pleasing to God," says D'Aubigné's commentator, (p. 578,) in which the gross immorality and injustice of Lutheran "justification by faith" may be said to be summed up. Again, in Luther's own confession, "*Faith alone justifies before God, WITHOUT WORKS!*" (p. 179.) Charles V. must indeed have looked with

contempt on such pretended reforms in doctrine as these words imply.

Again, from one of Luther's sermons, "We do not become righteous, as Aristotle pretends, by doing works of righteousness: *but having become righteous, we do such works!!*" (p. 193.) So Luther himself broke his vow as a Monk and married; justifying perhaps his falsehood by his faith. On the same ground Rush might have said, since I believe, my works *must* be good. I do not by this mean to put these men in the same category certainly; and I allow that Luther did good in spite of his doctrine, in getting permission for priests to marry: but this does not excuse *him personally*, for he was a Monk, and had made a vow; and if men or women (*after a certain age and of their own free choice*) like even now to adopt such chastity, I do not see why they should be prevented.

The revival of letters, the discovery of printing, and the magnetic compass in the 15th century, preceded Luther's Reformation in the 16th. The Medici family at Florence, after learned Greek scholars had been forced into Italy from Constantinople, in consequence of the conquest of this by the Turks in 1453, countenanced the revival of the religion contained in Plato's works. (*Op. Cit.*, p. 71.) It is a great pity for the world they did not succeed in putting the religion of these in place of that of the Reformation, which was partly occasioned by the above discoveries. Mr. Scott, in the *preface* to D'Aubigné, p. 9, opposes even this writer himself, when he says, as we have just seen was the case, that the enfranchisement of the human mind was *begun* by the discoveries of printing, the compass, &c., &c. The Puritanical Scotch Translator, however, will not allow these even to have played a *minor* part in forwarding the Reformation! He says—"take from philosophy what she owes to the Gospel, and even France will be found to owe little indeed to the natural powers of the mind." Now I may reply, as I have done before, that the state of the ancient Greek and Roman PAGAN world is a satisfactory answer to Mr. Scott's argument, that civil liberty, and order, and civilisation, cannot exist without protestantism, and consequently without Christianity. I am willing to admit, that Protestantism is somewhat more favourable to civil liberty, than the *pure* Catholicism of Italy and Spain is, though not so much so as the *reformed* Catholicism, (so to call it,) at least was under Louis Phillippe of France; and I am also ready to

allow, that as Luther preached—"none ought to suffer constraint, *liberty is the essence of the faith*,"\* he deserves credit on the score of having in respect to theoretical toleration made a *real* improvement. But we must at the same time remember, that Luther could scarcely attempt any *reform* in the church, and preach otherwise; since his very object was the *liberty of changing*. But to say that he was preaching real Christianity—which expressly commands unconditional submission, and was probably adopted by Constantine and others on this account—when he was preaching as above, is totally absurd. When we are told to "obey the powers which be"—and when St. Paul tells the fugitive slave to go back to his master—any attempt to engraft the principles of *civil liberty* on such a creed, must be clearly futile. The increase of such liberty, then in Europe, after the Reformation, was caused in *reality* by the Reformers declining to adhere to strict principles of Christianity. The *inventions* of the 15th century show that (contrary to Scott's view,) the human mind could, without the assistance of scripture, contribute to civilisation; and though, as Mr. Hallam truly says, (*Introduction to the Literature of Europe*,) "the doctrines of Luther, taken together, are not more rational \* \* than those of the church of Rome," still Luther was obliged to change something for the better to gain converts, and fortunately for mankind, he preached against the supreme spiritual power of the Pope—"the priest having the power to forgive sin," (vol. ii, p. 292,) and against the celibacy of the clergy.

Let us add—Although it may be doubtful whether "Luther contributed much to take learning out of the hands of the priests, who had engrossed it to themselves, as those of ancient Egypt did," we must, according to D'Aubigné, give him credit for *attempting* (vol. ii., p. 331) to do this. It was printing that did it in reality; and contrary to Mr. Scott's opinion, Luther was, therefore, in

\* Vol. ii, p. 206. When Luther preached thus, too, he was *not in power*. This consideration takes off much from the merit of the man; for, *out of power*, tolerance is a much easier virtue. Accordingly, we find that, though Protestantism at first was more tolerant than its enemy, still when it got the ascendancy under Elizabeth, it was sufficiently intolerant, (see p. 36,) and has only become somewhat less so at present, in consequence of the spirit of the age.



in this respect, much indebted to this recent invention, for power to carry on the work of the Reformation. But this and the other inventions of the 15th century would, no doubt, *of themselves*, eventually have brought about the above useful *practical* changes, and the same increase in the amount of civil liberty. D'Aubigné, indeed, thinks not: but he is still far more sensible than his translator who will not admit they had *any influence whatever!* in the work of the Reformation. It is not improbable that this could not have taken place, even so easily as it did, without some previous general improvement, in consequence of the invention of printing, &c., &c. This invention, by enabling the middle and poorer class to get books, would also enable them (after the revival of the study of Greek and Roman authors) to perceive, that as good government had existed before the appearance of Christianity, so it might exist with *less of it* than Catholicism required; and such is, *in fact*, Protestantism, (I mean it is a sort of *half* Christianity,) though of course Protestants will deny such an obvious truth.

But one of the most powerful causes of the success of the Reformation (I think omitted by D'Aubigné?) was the following, viz., *that its principles were embraced by some of those in power*, viz., Albert, hereditary Duke of Prussia, the Elector of Saxony, and partly by our Henry VIII. Frederick the Great justly said, he owed his ancestors much for throwing off this thralldom; and no doubt some idea of *personal interest* contributed to make the above sovereigns embrace Luther's views. And without this the Reformation would probably have stopped! So much for Scott attributing the change solely to Divine interposition! Henry VIII.'s adoption of it arose from the very *lowest kind* of personal interest.

I am glad to find that an author, who published in 1822 a bold and excellent reply to the Rev. T. Rennell's *Essay against Scepticism*,—and which Essay, supported as it was by opinion all through the country, may, perhaps, be said to have forced Mr. Lawrence to a recantation dishonourable, if not to himself, at all events so to the opinion of Britain,—holds the views of the Reformation advocated in this note. I allude to Sir T. C. Morgan, who says, (*Philosophy of Morals*, p. 289, note,—Colburn, 1822,) "Notwithstanding the number of sects, there are but three modifications of opinion at all tenable: Deism, Unitarianism, and Catholicism. The doctrines of the Church of



England are too much like Popery, *under another name and head.*" Such being the case, we may well, indeed, ask, if Luther's so-called Reformation was worth even the blood of the 70,000 Protestants (to name no other victims) it caused to be butchered in France, on August 24th, 1572, called the massacre of St. Bartholomew? (Taylor's *Diegesis*. p. 137. Truelove and Holyoake.) Luther would certainly have done far more good to humanity had he at once preached Theism, and, probably, such religion would have been quite as well received by the Roman Catholics: the *vast extent* of the above-named massacre, shows it could scarcely have been worse received.

Sir C. Morgan, also like myself, has no great opinion of Christian Missionary labours, and (p. 180) he calls them "ill-timed and irrational." In short, his is no doubt the work of a Theist or Pantheist. Perhaps he speaks almost as plainly as Gibbon, as to his own faith; and certainly more so than Mr. Robert Cox. So that the work deserves to be studied attentively *even now* by all Statesmen, were it, indeed, only for the following passage as to what the Reformation, at all events, *should* have been. "The punishment of libel against the established religion, (he alludes probably to the cases of Paine and Richard Carlile,) is a flat contradiction to the right of private judgment on which Protestantism is founded." (p. 336.) The despotic opinion of Britain will not *even yet* admit the truth of this, but, *as usual*, is so much the more disposed to punish socially, because Law at the present period, it seems, will not imprison the supposed culprit. *We have yet to learn that political liberty constitutes only a part of real freedom*; and that many nations behind us in this are yet far before us in *social*, and, I may add, *practical* religious liberty. I conclude this note, then, by referring the reader to the quotation from Quinet with which I have begun and by re-asserting that this applies in many respects more forcibly to our Puritanical Protestantism than to Catholicism. The latter is at least the open foe of liberty; while the former, by *pretending* to concede it, insinuates its love of monotonous and strict order into our every-day intercourse, and by its tyrannical influence leaves us scarcely a vestige of the most valuable perhaps of all liberty,—I mean *social* liberty.

Note E, Page 70.—Since the remarks on the passages in Tacitus and Suetonius were written, I find the Rev. Robert Taylor in his *Diegesis* (pp. 372-9,) endeavours to make out,

1st,—that the passage in Tacitus is “a forgery or interpolation;” and, 2ndly,—that “there is no reasonable ground that by *Chrestus*, Suetonius meant Christus.” (p. 377.)

In regard to Tacitus, I have only to observe that Gibbon (chap. xvi.) considers it genuine; and as to its having been put into the text in order to favour the truth of the evidences of Christianity as Taylor suggests, (p. 376), it seems to make Tacitus speak more *against the utility and purity of this religion*, than was necessary. Surely a skilful interpolater would have been anxious to have got a testimony of so much value as that of the great historian somewhat less inimical to the *very utility* of the creed. Without, therefore, denying merit to Taylor for his attempts to get at truth on this point, and recommending impartial men to read the twenty reasons he gives, I for the present follow Gibbon on this head.

For similar reasons I follow him in considering that *Chrestus* in Suetonius is synonymous with Christus, for here again Gibbon in a note renders the term *malefica* (not *magical* as he says some have done) but like *exitibilis*—pernicious. Surely interpolaters would not have spoken so decidedly against the *very utility* of a creed they wished future generations to adopt.

I now come to what Mr. Taylor says about the passage in Pliny, who was the personal friend of Tacitus. He observes that, contrary to Dr. Semler, of Leipsic, and others, he cannot “admit it to be fairly conquered.” (p. 383.) But this passage will tend then to favour the belief that the foregoing in Tacitus is genuine, for the sentiments of Pliny on the Christian faith, as I shall now proceed to state, are very similar, as was to be expected, to those of Tacitus and Suetonius, though, perhaps, he scarcely speaks so badly of it as a creed, for, although in one place he calls it *amentia*, and in another *superstitio prava*, (p. 380), yet he had, in a passage just before, spoken well of its morality, (*but be it observed, in this latter respect only on the testimony of a Christian*, for he himself, as Gibbon says, (chap. xvi.), seems to have known little or nothing about it!) Hence, as the Christian under accusation was naturally enough anxious, to make the new religion appear good, we should not value this testimony too highly; and *certainly not regard it as Pliny's own opinion*.

In this letter of Pliny we find two assertions that will, I think, justify the Roman government in its somewhat harsh

treatment of the Christians on this occasion. 1st,—They seemed to have objected to recognise the Roman Emperors as the head of the government, probably because they were “required to invoke the image of the Emperor with wine and frankincense,” and this seemed to them more akin to *divine* honours than what he was entitled to. Perhaps in this they were partly right; and yet they should have remembered that even such honours did not make the Emperor equal to Jupiter, the D. O. M., or Supreme God.

2ndly.—As Mr. Taylor observes, they met in societies *before daylight* (*ante lucem*), and the Romans might well believe nocturnal meetings of bodies of men plotted something “against the welfare and peace of society.” (p. 381.) Such nocturnal meetings had always been by the *xii* tables considered illegal. (Gibbon, chap. xlv.)

I think when these two points are considered, we shall see in the Roman *apparent* persecution, nothing more than a *mere political* precaution for the safety of the state, and with Gibbon “be unable to discover any bigotry in the language or proceedings of Pliny.” (*Note*, chap. xvi.) He was only doing his duty in requiring that the new infatuation (*amentia*), as he justly called it, should not actually *put down* the established divinities of the empire, and that this was its object, the subsequent suppression of Paganism by force—by the “punishment even of death,” (*Diegesis*, p. 137)—fully evinced. We can more easily excuse a little severity of Pliny too, because, (as Gibbon observes), his father, the naturalist, lived at the time of the supposed darkness of the crucifixion, yet says nothing about it in his great work which recorded all such wonders of nature! The learned son, then, might well call such creed an “infatuation.”

As to the—at *first sight*—more reasonable objection of the Jews and Christians to pay divine honours to the statue of the Emperor, Pliny, in another passage, separates, in some measure, the human and divine, and does not call the Emperor a Deity. It was merely something on the same principle as we say—“Fear God and honour the King.”

Note F, Page 110.—Having spoken of Roman oaths, I may here add some remarks on the precautions the Romans took to favour justice, in case also of debts. I shall with the same view then allude to the state of lawyers.

In the early time of the Republic, the debtor was retained in a state of slavery (*Quin.*, vi., 3, 26) by his cre-

ditor *until* he found means to discharge his debt. Subsequently, (A. U. 429), "the law only required that the goods of the debtor, and not his person, should be given up to the creditor." (*Roman Antiquities*, p. 40.) Subsequently, "only one-fourth part of the debt" required to be paid by law, which, with some little change, seems to have been in force at the time of Julius Cæsar and afterwards. If the debtor were actually always *obliged sooner or later* to pay even this one-fourth, it seems to have been better than some of our modern laws, that allow the debtor to escape without paying *any part* of his debt.

Lawyers, too, under the Roman government seem to have been in a better position *for the public*, though not perhaps for themselves, than in modern times. "By the Cincian law, lawyers were prohibited from taking fees or presents from those who consulted them. \* \* \* Hence the law was studied from a desire of assisting fellow citizens, and through their favour of rising to preferments." (*Roman Antiquities*, p. 155.) "Afterwards, lawyers were permitted to take fees, *but not above a certain sum.*" (*Idem.*) I apprehend while such laws are in force, there is at least *less temptation* than there is at present, to make the worse appear the better cause, and that no gentleman at that period had much inducement to make a flaming speech in favour of a murderer's innocence, when he had the man's confession of guilt in his pocket, as one of our lawyers (now noted among pious persecutors) is said to have done, I know not with what truth.

I think when the above view as to the state of debtor and creditor, and lawyers, is considered, and the fact added to it of a distribution of corn gratuitously at stated periods to the poorest classes (under Augustus 200,000 received corn from the public," *Op. Cit.*, p. 160), we shall be inclined to think with Adams, that "the *bulk of the people* \* \* were not more oppressed under the Empire than they had been under the Republic;" (*Op. Cit.*, p. 145) and further, when their *high state of religious freedom* is added, that ancient surpasses modern civilization as far as that most important point, the moral and political state of the world, is concerned.

I shall close this note by an allusion to a belief that seems to have somewhat increased even while this work has been passing through the press—I mean "spirit-rapping." In a work on Reforms, I am the more bound to notice this, as in some cases too vivid a belief in this fallacy seems not only



to have impaired the reason, but actually to have led to suicide. I well know from the sacrifice of time and money I was obliged to make to satisfy myself that *clairvoyance* is a fallacy, that the same will be required as regards spirit-rapping, since, of course, our American and other exhibitors who come over here are not in general in a position to work for nothing. But even when their belief is sincere, and they are known as honest, this is very little more reason for taking their exhibitions *almost on trust*, as many do, than if they were known as pennyless impostors. Although I do not approve of ridicule in such matters, yet (this apart) I am glad to observe the "wizard of the north" is now showing how all these "rappings" may be done by *merely natural means*. The "mysterious lady" did the same formerly as regards *clairvoyance*; and it had a good effect, by showing that such wonderful feats were *not of necessity* supernatural. When this is clearly seen, men will soon begin to investigate the matter more strictly, and no longer be *half frightened* away from all investigation, as I have known parties to be in regard to the far less awful pretentions of *clairvoyance*.

THE END.

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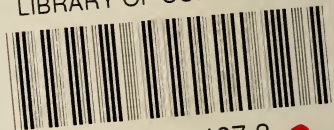
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